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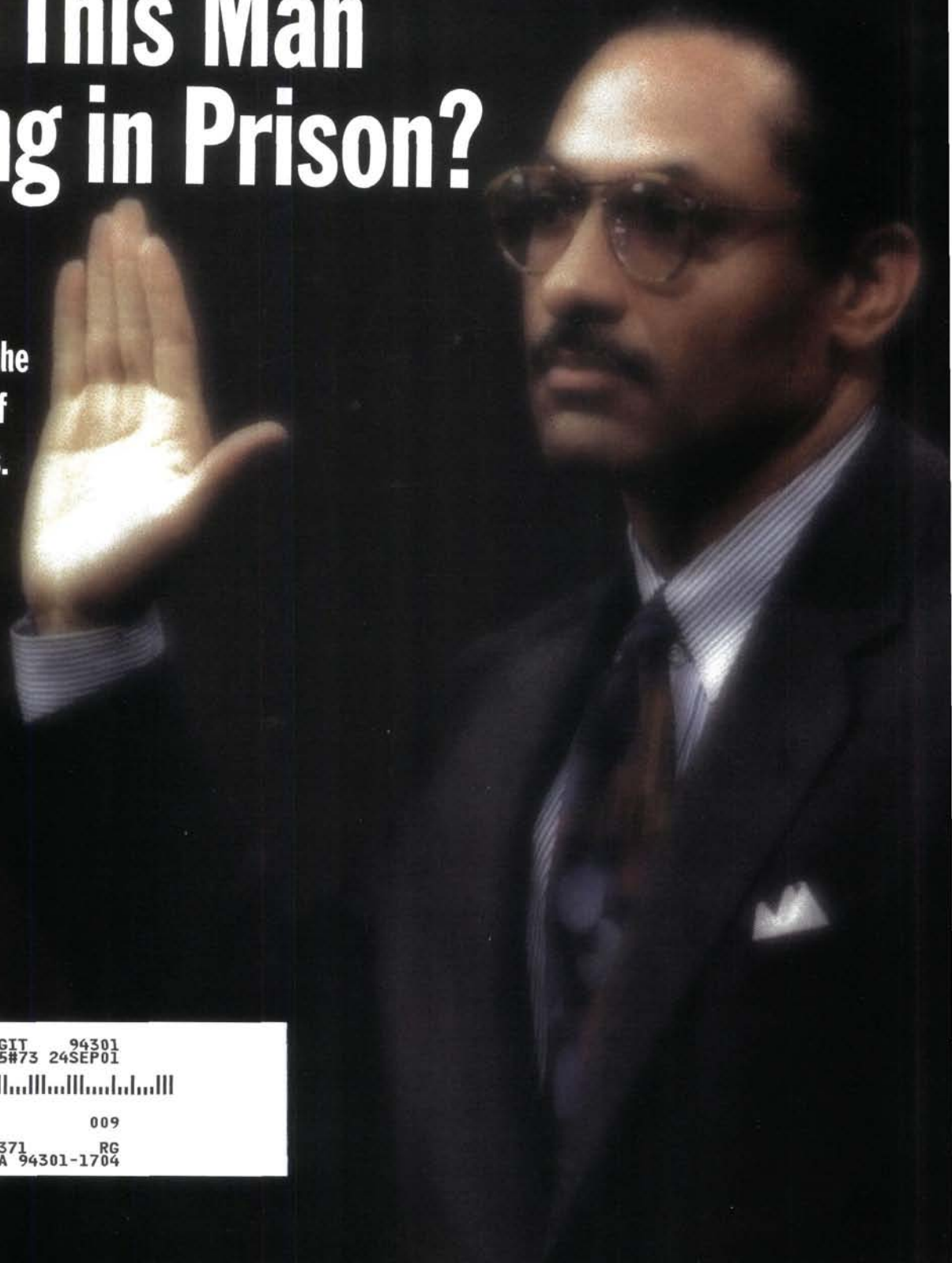

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CORRESPONDENCE

Egypt's link

To the editors:

Your December 22, 1997, editorial ("The Real Linkage") is, particularly with regard to Egypt, a bad "political fiction" piece.

The president of Egypt is not and cannot be summoned to any meeting. He is invited and is free to accept or decline according to his judgment of Egypt's interest and the interest of peace. President Mubarak did not attend the meeting in October 1996 because he knew—and he has been proven right—that Prime Minister Netanyahu was unwilling to move toward respecting the commitments of his country. The other participants not only understood President Mubarak's reasons, but some later recognized the correctness of his stand.

Egypt is an independent country, which cannot be penalized or coerced into acting in a way inconsistent with its goal of promoting the just and comprehensive peace for which it has relentlessly worked since President Sadat's courageous initiative.

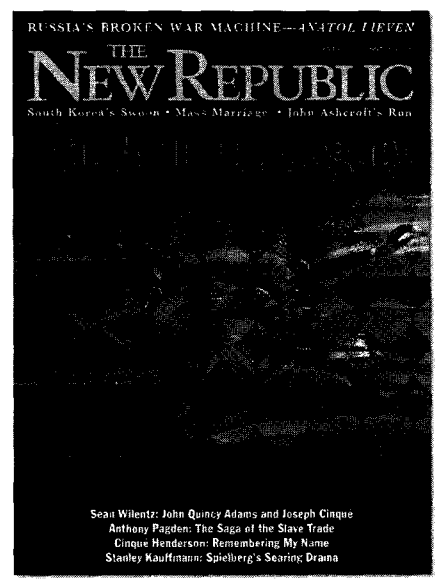
The economic aid Egypt receives is a two-way street which benefits both countries, contributing to the development and stability of Egypt, creating jobs in the United States, and promoting U.S. exports. It also creates an environment of good will in the quest to achieve common goals. Trying to use it as a weapon would be cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. At the same time, we know that the aid is not eternal, and together we are preparing, through cooperation and partnership, for the progressive diminution of direct aid in the future.

Egypt's adherence to peace, and its role in promoting meaningful and fruitful negotiations among all the parties to the conflict in the Middle East, have been instrumental in achieving positive results. If the process is suffering today, that is due to the policies of the Israeli government which are in contradiction with international law and contractual obligations. In this regard, Egypt and the U.S. are closely cooperating, and the two presidents are in close contact to coordinate the reanimation of the process.

Egypt does not ride with the enemies of the United States. However, we do have independent positions that do not necessarily always coincide with the positions of the United States. Egypt and the U.S. are two independent countries in a strategic, friendly relationship based on equality and mutual understanding. Thus, when the two do not agree, each understands and appreciates the motives of the other in light of a mature and close friendship.

Our position on Libya is well-known. We have used our contacts to encourage moderation, and we have achieved tangible results. Regarding the Lockerbie tragedy, we have, together with the Arab League, the Organization of African Unity, and the nonaligned countries, been exerting efforts to ensure that the truth be uncovered, the suspects be tried, and the guilty be punished. Different views on the venue of the trial should not hamper these goals, and this is also the opinion of some of the families of the victims.

Our position on Iraq is similarly well-known. We have contributed greatly to the liberation of Kuwait. We have supported the resolutions of the Security


RUSSIA'S BROKEN WAR MACHINE—ANATOL LIEVEN
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Council which were subsequently adopted, and continue to insist on the necessity for Iraq to implement them. At the same time, in accordance with the spirit of Resolution 986, we insist that the suffering of the Iraqi people be alleviated. This position of principle is shared by the great majority of the countries of the world, including the United States. Discussions which take place in this regard are aimed at agreeing on the best ways to achieve that, given the differing views on the part of the countries involved.

Regarding the Doha conference, I am not aware that it was a conference convened by the United States. In fact, it was a conference that the parties decided to convene as part of the peace process promoting economic cooperation as a complement to progress on the political front. Because the peace process was stalled as a result of the policies of the Netanyahu government, with which even the U.S. government is unhappy, it was normal that many countries, including Egypt, abstained from attending. The

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peace process has to walk on both feet: bilateral and multilateral—otherwise it would only limp towards an uncertain future.

Egypt has, on all questions, positions which are very clear. It never tries to have it, as you say, "both ways." Its only way is to work for its own development and the well-being of its people—together with its Arab and African brothers, in the context of peace and cooperation in the region and friendship with all those who share our lofty goals, eminent among whom is the United States of America.

AHMED MAHER EL SAYED
Ambassador
Embassy of The Arab Republic of Egypt

Affirmative reaction

To the editors:

I was very disappointed to read Jonathan Chait's grossly misleading piece ("Numbers Racket," December 22, 1997), that the University of Michigan (including its law school) is covering up a practice of blatant racial discrimination in its admissions process. The law school, as any graduate of the university, including Mr. Chait, should know, has an entirely different admissions process than the undergraduate school—a process that, in compliance with *Bakke*, considers race as one factor among many. (I did not attend the undergraduate school, so I cannot comment on its admissions practices.)

The law school's dean of admissions statement, which Mr. Chait mocks as a lie and a cover-up, that "[w]e do not have a separate review of files, nor do we have a different standard for minority applicants" is absolutely true. The law school has precisely the type of admissions process that "honest defenders of racial preferences" like Chait purport to support. In fact, far from stifling discussion about the topic, the law school has embarked recently on a thoughtful examination of the proper role of race in admissions, as well as in faculty hiring and classroom discussion, that hopefully will advance the law school's understanding and treatment of this most difficult issue.

JEFF FISHER
Santa Monica, California

To the editors:

Around 1970, during which time I was the Detroit bureau chief for *The New York Times*, I interviewed the president of the University of Michigan on preferences designed to push blacks into the university. He admitted—no question, no lies—that the university was accepting blacks who scored below average. He said that if the university admitted according to test scores alone, all of its students would

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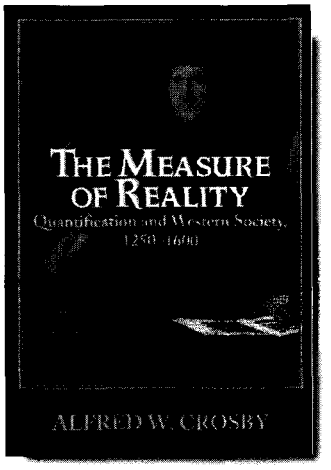

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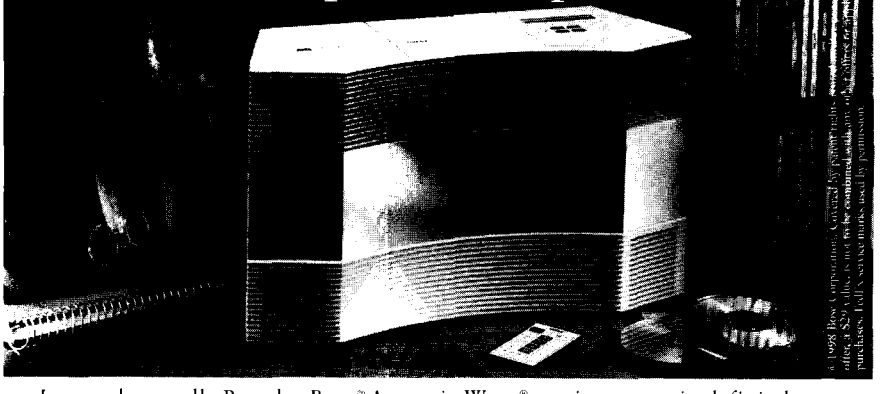

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FROM WASHINGTON

Gipper's flippers

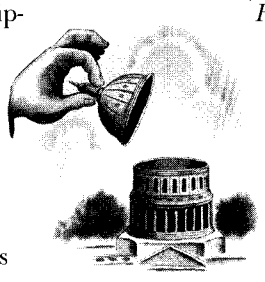
The shocking disappearance of the federal budget deficit has transformed the political climate overnight. Washington spent 15 years locked in venomous finger-pointing over who deserves the blame for trillions of dollars in crippling red ink. And now that the budget deficit is gone, you would expect another round of rancorous partisan chest-thumping over who deserves credit. Yet the predictable acrimony has—at least for the moment—become subsumed in a pleasant, wonky national symposium on how we can best share our newfound bounty.

All this pleasantness is a big mistake. We have at least a decade of fiscal abundance to ponder productive uses for the budget surplus. Right now, we need a good round of unconstructive, backward-looking partisan bloodshed. After all, we'll never figure out what to do with the surplus until we can agree on what caused it in the first place.

Already, the formative stages of a party line are stirring to life in the right-wing press: the disappearance of the deficit vindicates Ronald Reagan. *Wall Street Journal* columnist Paul Gigot iterated a version of the line a week ago. "The good news here," he wrote, "is that we really did grow ourselves out of the deficit, as Ronald Reagan predicted." This has a certain superficial appeal. It is a mathematical truism that a prolonged period of rapid economic growth could reduce or eliminate the budget deficit. But nobody ever denied this—what people doubted was that Reagan's economic policies would lead to that kind of economic growth. And, in fact, they did not. The federal budget never came anywhere close to being balanced while Reagan held office.

So, Reagan's departure from the Oval Office some nine years ago would, on the surface, complicate things. But this time discrepancy can be fudged. A recent cover story in *Forbes* argued that Reagan "sowed ... a boom that picked up in the 1980s, was interrupted by the mild Bush recession of 1990–91 and got rolling around the time Clinton took office.... Clinton has had no economic policy." The American Enterprise Institute's James Glassman chipped in, "It's the economy that is balancing the budget." And, of course, "Reagan is the only politician who deserves credit for the rebirth of the American economy." Republican polemicists like *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol and *Washington Times* columnist Paul Craig Roberts have also joined the chorus. You can see where this is going: Ronald Reagan balanced the budget.

Conservatives' strained efforts to give all the credit to Reagan is a symptom of a larger, embarrassing phenomenon: stirred by his deteriorating health, conservative pundits are tripping over each other to slather obeisance upon the great leader. And swallowing it requires a faith held by only truly fanatical believers—the sort of faith to which an inside-the-Beltway unbelieving journalist-type like me is not privy.



For example, if Reagan holds all responsibility for the 1998 economy, nine years after his presidency ended, how can he hold no responsibility for the 1990 "Bush recession," which immediately followed his tenure? This lack of internal consistency must confound even the Gipper's most loyal adherents. (Perhaps further meditation upon the theology will reveal that Reagan created the 1990 recession deliberately, to punish us for straying from His teachings.) And maybe Reagan's disciples should explain why they credit him for today's balanced budget when they have spent the last decade and a half vigorously denying that he had anything to do with the budget deficits that occurred when he actually was president.

Another inconvenient detail is that Reaganites very loudly bemoaned the end of Reaganism several years ago. After President Bush agreed to raise taxes in 1990, conservatives wailed that he had betrayed Reagan. *Wall Street Journal* editor Robert Bartley wrote that "the just-announced tax increases spelled the end of a great economic experiment with which I'd been associated." A *Journal* editorial could not have been more explicit in distancing Reagan from the economy after 1990. "The economic ideas expounded in these columns have shared the blame, and sometimes even the credit, for the economy of the 1980s," the editors sniffed. "It appears that the economy of the 1990s is likely to belong to someone else. Good luck." When the economy subsequently tanked, the right claimed vindication.

And, when President Clinton raised taxes in 1993, conservatives again swore in unison that it would cause a recession and balloon the deficit. *Forbes* staked out the most hysterical position, urging its readers to pull their savings out of America and invest in Asia. (Whoops.) Subsequent articles favorably considered the benefits of fleeing the United States. Now, Clinton has gone from having an economic policy destructive enough to justify mass exile to having no economic policy at all. This clarification may console any *Forbes* readers credulous enough to have heeded the earlier advice, assuming they can still obtain copies of *Forbes* in the various countries to which they have fled.

The danger in this is not that future generations will know Ronald Reagan as the Great Deficit Slayer, but that the end of the deficit will cause us to repeat the policies that helped create it. If you believe that Reaganomics balanced the budget, and the painful deficit-reduction packages pushed through by Bush and Clinton haven't helped at all, well, the lesson for what we should do with the surplus is pretty clear: tax cuts, and plenty of 'em.

Unfortunately, the Clinton administration has already sabotaged its own chances of winning this debate. You might recall that last year the White House justified its decision to join with congressional Republicans to cut taxes and balance the budget on political grounds: only a bona fide balanced budget deal could free Democrats from the taint of big-spending liberalism and give them the fiscal credibility necessary to restore affirmative government.

But now the deficit has disappeared on its own, well in advance of any austerity measures imposed by last year's pact. If Clinton had rejected GOP overtures, he could have hogged the credit. Instead, he's going to end up sharing it with Congress. His political machinations have turned out to be a political blunder.

I won't lose any sleep over Clinton's approval ratings. What bothers me is that Republicans now have the chance to claim that cutting taxes does not hinder—indeed, it helps—reduce the deficit. Substantively, of course, this is wrong; last year's tax cuts, by design, won't lose significant revenue for several years. But somehow I don't think that's going to stop them from saying it.

JONATHAN CHAIT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 2, 1998

TOCQUEVILLE AND THE MULLAH

It was not an ordinary week in the history of "dual containment."

Iran. The president of the Islamic Republic gave a startling interview to CNN, in which he displayed an unexpected familiarity with the history and the theory of America. "The American civilization is worthy of respect," Mohammed Khatami said. This is owed to the fact that its democracy was the creation of religious people. Referring to the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and then to Tocqueville ("which I am sure most Americans have read"), and then to Lincoln, the mullah affirmed that "the significance of this civilization is in the fact that liberty found religion as a cradle for its growth and religion found protection of liberty as its divine calling. Therefore liberty and faith never clashed." He proceeded to suggest that the Islamic revolution in Tehran should adopt the same American framework, "which couples religiosity with liberty," and he spoke of Islam as "a religion which calls all humanity, irrespective of religion or belief, to rationality and logic." He called for cultural exchanges between Iran and the United States, "professors, writers, scholars, artists, journalists, and tourists," so that a "dialogue between civilizations" may begin.

So the Great Satan is no more. Ayatollah Khatami does not speak the language of Ayatollah Khomeini. This is very excellent, and policymakers in Washington permitted themselves a spot of excitement. President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright, according to the State Department, were "seized" by the prospect of a change of relations with Iran. (Our president, remember, is a dialogue junkie. The Ayatollah said what? Get me Deborah Tannen!) An American official told *The Los Angeles Times* that the administration is "eager" to go beyond the cultural exchanges proposed by Khatami. There was Nixon-in-China talk. "It may take a while," said a senior Clinton administration official, "but we finally appear to be heading in the right direction."

The rest of the Iranian president's analysis of America was somewhat overlooked in the commotion. There were plenty of misunderstandings. Some of them were charming, as in Khatami's little rhapsody on Plymouth Rock: "In Plymouth, Massachusetts, there is a rock which is respected and revered by all Americans. The secret of American civilization lies in this rock. . . ." The ka'aba of democracy! But of course there is no ka'aba in a democracy, which is the essential point. Khatami's fine appreciation of the religious origins of the American order failed to take account of the fact that the American order is a liberal order. There is more paradox in the American philosophy than a theocrat can see. For the God-fearing Founders of the United States elected *not* to establish an official religion. They religiously devised an unreligious state.

But some of Khatami's misunderstandings were not at all charming. His sympathy for the United States does not seem to extend beyond our early history. "Policies pursued by American politicians outside the United States over the past half a century, since World War II, are incompatible with the American civilization founded on democracy, freedom, and human dignity." Never mind that many of those policies (no, not all of them) were not only compatible with American civilization, they were an urgent and successful defense of it. But Khatami sees only "domination." Indeed, American policy "continues to be a prisoner of cold war mentality." For this reason, the Iranian president ruled that Iran has "no need for political ties with the United States." As for Iran's own foreign policy, Khatami had nothing complicated or contrite to say. He condemned terrorism and denied "categorically" that Iran has anything to do with it. He resorted to the old semantics of revolutionary mischief, instructing that "supporting peoples who fight for the liberation of their land is not, in my opinion, supporting terrorism." He asserted that American policies toward Arabs and Muslims are an expression of "Western anti-Semitism," and that "certain foreign policy decisions of the United States are in fact made in Tel Aviv," and that the Israeli government is "a racist regime which does not have the backing of the Jewish people." From all this, we come away with two conclusions: first, that the Clinton administration should calm down, and choose to be "seized" instead by the incontrovertible facts about Iran's arsenal and its sponsorship of political violence beyond its borders; and second, that Tocqueville is not all you need to know.

Iraq. Less startling, more disturbing. Saddam Hussein again refused to allow United Nations inspectors to do their work. An Iraqi newspaper called the American leader of the United Nations team, who was searching

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for the biological and chemical weapons that the Iraqis may actually be testing on humans, "a hyena." The American government talked tough; but then it got on the phone to the Russians, whose strategic objective in this matter is the lifting of sanctions against Iraq, so that Russia can feel important and do business, and to the French, who are pressing even for "closing the files" on the inspection of Saddam's nuclear program. (*Et ils veulent s'enrichir aussi.*) Then Secretary of Defense Cohen made an astonishing remark: Saddam, he said, "should not and is not in a position to dictate who can conduct inspections. It's the equivalent of a parolee deciding who his parole officer is going to be." A parolee? It was a clarifying gaffe.

Why isn't the Clinton administration ashamed that this is happening to it once more? When will it decide to take action against Saddam at a time and a place of its own choosing? (The place is obvious. It is Baghdad.) Why has our policy toward Iraq (and Iran) become more and more a corollary of our policy toward Russia? When will the president finally grasp that the prospect of Saddam's use of genocidal weapons is not a "scenario" but a likelihood, since those are weapons that he has already used?

An awful week, then, in which "dual containment" was all that was contained. •

NOTEBOOK

STOP ME BEFORE I TAKE AGAIN: Last year, in a fit of contrition, the Democratic National Committee decided to handcuff itself. As penance for its financial misdeeds, the party organ announced it would no longer accept contributions of $100,000 or more, contributions from legal aliens, or contributions from U.S. subsidiaries of foreign businesses. Bit by bit, the handcuffs have slipped. In November, DNC officials admitted that the ban on contributions of $100,000 and up were hurting the party's bank account and ditched it. Then last week the DNC quietly dropped its ban on money from legal aliens. It was "not an issue of money. This is an issue of principle," Steve Grossman, DNC national chairman, told *The Washington Post.* (The principle, in this case, being flak from Hispanic and Asian groups.) That leaves just one self-imposed ban left, on U.S. subsidiaries, and one DNC spokesperson said, "It's under active review." Still, DNC officials cheerfully stress that "campaign finance reform is one of our major priorities." Well, at least until the next election.

THE MIRACLE OF PLASTIC: Republicans are notoriously blithe about most forms of tax fraud, except one. When it comes to the earned income tax credit, a subsidy for the working poor, they are shocked, maddened, by the merest hint of cheating—never mind that EITC cheating has plummeted recently, or that it's never been much worse than cheating on corporate taxes. Now, House Speaker Newt Gingrich has decided to harp on the theme again. Only this time he's taking a constructive approach. In his recent "Goals for a Generation" road show, Gingrich suggested the government "contract [the EITC] out to Visa or MasterCard or American Express or somebody." Let's ponder this one. By April 15, every American family would send one copy of their tax return to the IRS and one copy to Visa. Visa, having lured away the IRS's top accountants to staff its new tax bureaucracy, would determine who qualifies for the credit, send out the checks, then dispatch its own agents to investigate fraudulent claims. Maybe Gingrich was just kidding, but the problem with Newt is that you can never tell.

POST HOC: Return with us to 1995, when these pages incurred the wrath of *The Washington Post* and friends of diversity training everywhere after we published Ruth Shalit's long article about racial tensions in the *Post* newsroom. Leonard Downie, the executive editor of the *Post,* responded to the article with an outburst of moral and journalistic outrage. In a letter to this magazine, he denounced "the maddening technique of big-lie propaganda" and accused Shalit of fomenting "racial McCarthyism." So we were a little startled, and more than a little delighted, to read in *The New York Times* on January 12 that our colleagues at *The Washington Post* have had a change of heart. Here was the once-indignant Downie plaintively acknowledging the difficulties of managing diversity on his watch and remarking that Shalit's piece had hit home. "It reflected reality," he said, "because we have surfaced those tensions more than any other paper has." He added, "If you don't surface those tensions then people suffer in silence, and when you surface them it creates some discomfort." We're delighted to have played a small part in the healing process on 15th Street. Maybe next time the tension-surfacers will do without the huffing and puffing altogether and respond reasonably to the substance of a legitimate analysis of the most difficult problem facing American life today.

HOME NEWS: With this issue, TNR welcomes Nurith Aizenman, formerly an editor of *The Washington Monthly,* as managing editor. She replaces David Grann, who, along with Jacob Heilbrunn, joins the ranks of TNR's senior editors. Also this week, Jonathan Chait moves from staff writer to associate editor, while Joseph Landau moves from assistant editor to assistant managing editor.

TYPE MISCASTING: Observant TNR readers may have noticed that several pages in last week's issue featured a slightly different typeface than normal. We apologize. Our crack quality-control team has traced the problem to an error at our printer's plant, and we've been assured it will not happen again. To those who saw the change and let us know about it, thanks for reading so closely. And to those who didn't, pretend you didn't read this. •

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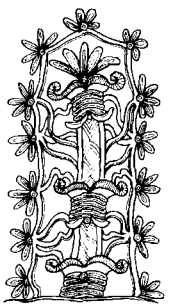
THE HARD QUESTIONS

THE BIG SHRUG

By Michael Walzer

We are awash in statistical studies of income inequality, but even the best of them underestimate what is happening in this country. Last month, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington-based research group, released state-by-state comparisons of family income, showing what seem to me astonishing disparities between the wealthiest and poorest fifths of American families—20 to one in the state of New York, almost 30 to one in the District of Columbia. And yet, since the center used Census figures, which do not record incomes above $100,000 or pay attention to capital gains, the actual disparities are even larger.

Earlier studies by the Congressional Budget Office and the Economic Policy Institute show the same pattern—and they reveal that inequality has been growing steadily over the last several decades. "The U.S. has the most unequal distribution of income among advanced countries—and the degree of inequality has increased more here than in any comparable country," summarizes Harvard economist Richard Freeman. "The share of income going to the top fifth rose by 13 percent between 1979 and 1996, while the share going to the bottom fifth fell by 22 percent." Children of parents in the lowest fifth are poorer in the U.S. than in "almost all" other advanced countries; children from the highest fifth are richer.



No one seems to care about any of this. I suppose that's an exaggeration. The people who organize the studies obviously care, and they are trying to get others to care. But their general strategy—issuing reports in tones of surprised discovery and barely repressed outrage—doesn't seem to be working. The people falling behind in absolute terms—and also those slipping in relative terms—care even more. They must be running scared now, as are lots of other Americans. Freeman reports that we are now working longer hours than Europeans "and seemingly [longer than] the Japanese as well" in order to maintain our living standards.

But the poorest Americans have withdrawn from political life; they are defeated, resigned, apathetic, and, in any case, inarticulate and unheard. I am certain that if we were able to study rates of articulate complaint, we would find steep declines among the lowest fifth of Americans and significant increases among the highest fifth over the past three or four decades. The "complaint-articulation ratio" would show us to be far more unequal than a democracy can afford to be. And, of course, the people in the highest fifth aren't complaining about what's happening to the people in the lowest fifth.

The strategy of surprised discovery was once again, and perhaps more effectively, in evidence last December when Dr. Christopher Murray, also from Harvard, reported on a county-by-county study of life expectancy in the United States. *The New York Times* headlined its story, "SURPRISES IN A STUDY OF LIFE EXPECTANCIES." The surprises were pretty much what you would expect if you had been reading newspaper accounts of growing income inequality, but people are probably more ready to be surprised about life itself than about earnings. Regardless, what Murray discovered is not only that the United States has a bigger spread of longevities than you would find if you took in all of Europe, but that differences in the life expectancy of Americans are, as the *Times* reported, of "the sort found between poverty-ridden Sierra Leone and wealthy Japan."

The shortest American lives are lived where you would expect them to be lived: inner cities, the South, and Indian reservations. No surprises there. Commenting on the Murray study, Dr. James Marks, director of the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention, said that it was the size of the discrepancies that was the big surprise: "The findings have tremendous implications."

Do they? Marks sounds like a voice from the past. Once upon a time, statistics like Murray's would have sparked (at least) a political campaign to improve health services in the counties where people live the shortest lives, perhaps even a campaign for national health insurance, which is probably what accounts for Europe's relative egalitarianism when it comes to life span. I don't sense any spark now—and I'm not sure why. Isn't it amazing that in the country that leads the "First World," there are so many people living (and dying) in Third World conditions? Shouldn't we respond to this news with shock and anger? Naïve questions. Are we our brothers' keepers? The success of the ideological campaign against the welfare state has made that last question an entirely legitimate answer to the others. Inequality is the way of the world, and dole and dependency only make it worse. And if inequality grows even as we eliminate dole and dependency—well, it's a hard world; the competition is tougher these days.

One standard old-left response to all this is patience: if the world is really hard, more and more people will feel the hardness; if competition is tougher, there will be more and more losers. And what must follow eventually is a mass movement for social change, which will shift the trends, generating greater income equality and reviving (some version of) the welfare state. The worse things get, the better the political prospects. That was the American experience during the Depression, but in Europe "worse" conditions have commonly produced a

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frighteningly ugly politics. "The worse, the better" is a bad maxim. But what is the alternative?

Powerful economic and political forces are behind the inequality statistics, and for the moment they are either unopposed or very weakly opposed. And so there really isn't any alternative—certainly not for writers and magazine editors—except the strategy of surprise: we need still more well-publicized studies, not of income distribution itself in which, it appears, no one is interested, but of its "human interest" effects: on infant mortality, quality of education, career opportunities, housing, the impact of particular diseases, the experience of old age, and so on. Let the "surprises" mount, until, one day, there is a shock of recognition—and then there may be new possibilities for political mobilization.•

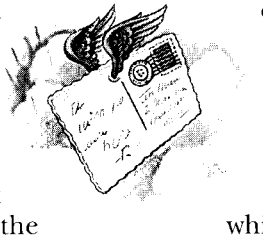
NEW YORK POSTCARD

LITTLER ITALY

By Vincent Cannato

Di Palo's has been making fresh mozzarella on the corner of Grand and Mott streets in Manhattan's Little Italy since 1925. Today, Louis Di Palo, his brother Sal, and sister Marie are the third generation of Di Palos to run the family business. The family maintains the cramped but cozy store with Old World charm. Huge wheels of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese grace the counter; meats and cheeses dangle from the ceiling. The Di Palos regularly give customers seminars on how to distinguish among olive oils from the various Italian regions.

But step outside of Di Palo's, and the Old World feel gives way to the bustle of Chinatown. On the three corners opposite Di Palo's stand a Chinese meat market, a Chinese fruit and vegetable stand, and a Chinese supermarket. Walking toward the legendary Ferrara's pastry store down the block, Louis Di Palo says he is sad about the changes in Little Italy—but not bitter. "Nothing lasts forever" here, he says. In the faces of Asian immigrants, he sees the same drive and energy that Italian immigrants once brought to the city.



For years, there has been a truce here between the last Italian holdouts and the more recent Chinese immigrants. Italian businessmen and residents, working through the Little Italy Restoration Association, have long tried to fend off Chinese-American incursions by putting unofficial boundaries around Little Italy. But it's a losing battle. During the early '70s, LIRA defined Little Italy as a roughly 24-square-block neighborhood. Today, the two blocks of Mulberry Street north of Canal Street remain the last bastion of Little Italy, with some scattered Italian restaurants and stores further north on Mulberry and along the side streets.

Chinese-owned businesses are tolerated on Mulberry only if they cater to the tourists and sell Little Italy souvenirs, and only if they do not use Chinese lettering on their signs. At Kathleen Beauty Salon on Mulberry Street, slashes purposefully cut through each of the five Chinese letters on the store's red awning testify to this unwritten code. (Nothing else on the awning or building is disturbed—the letters have recently been covered over.) Yet, the futility of such an approach is apparent one block away on Mott Street, home to a bustling Chinese sidewalk market where exotic fish, fruits, and vegetables are sold. Steam from sweatshops employing the neighborhood's Chinese women billows from the buildings.

So is Little Italy finished? Demographics would suggest that it is. Between 1982 and 1994, 132,000 legal Chinese immigrants settled in New York City, in contrast to just 7,500 Italians. Roughly one-third of the Chinese immigrants settled in lower Manhattan, while others headed for the city's newer Chinatowns in Flushing, Queens, and Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Gentrification is also taking a toll. Eighty years ago, the tenements lining Elizabeth, one block east of Mott, housed the teeming masses of the Italian ghetto. Today, the street is home not only to the occasional Italian butcher shop, with its ancient scales and cases, but to antique stores, an art supply store, a trendy bar like the M&R, even a computer store. Two Italian-Americans have opened a new restaurant on upper Mott Street—it serves upscale Japanese food. Across from John Gotti's old hangout, the Ravenite Social Club, there is a Mexican restaurant and bar.

Only a few Italians, mostly elderly, still live in the tenements. Most local business owners live in the outer boroughs or the suburbs. (Louis Di Palo lives in Brooklyn.) The owner of an Italian deli commutes to work every day from his home in New Jersey; the workers in his suburb's Chinese restaurant do a reverse commute from their tenement homes a few blocks from the deli. On weekends, suburban Italian-Americans return for a taste of the old neighborhood—or at least what's left of it.

But Little Italy has one thing going for it—one thing that might save it from the fate of Yorkville, the once-thriving German enclave five miles to the north in the East 80s, which has all but completely lost its original ethnic character. Unlike German ethnicity, Italian ethnicity sells. Health-conscious diners prefer pasta to schnitzel and dumplings. Italian-American groups used to protest movies like *The Godfather*, but the interest in Italian-American culture they spawned may save Little Italy—or at least a highly commercialized version of it.

If not, though, mourners of Little Italy can take some comfort: the enclave is fading because the descendants of earlier immigrants are escaping the confines of the ethnic ghetto and entering the American mainstream. Though the bustling neighborhoods of today's Asian,

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Hispanic, and Caribbean immigrants are essential to the revitalization of American cities, the success of the American experiment depends upon these neighborhoods eventually going the way of Manhattan's Little Italy.

In the meantime, Louis Di Palo plans to remain where he is. "I'm here as long as the people still come," he says. And the people are still coming. Di Palo says stores like his have become fashionable: "What's old is new." He looks at his store not just as a way to make a living, but as a way to honor his ancestors and keep alive the contributions Italian-Americans have made. And for a little while longer, a bit of old Little Italy still survives in the heart of the new Chinatown.

VINCENT CANNATO is writing a book about former New York mayor John Lindsay.

The IMF's bad medicine.

INDOAMNESIA

By Dave Kansas

While the White House stands by the International Monetary Fund's tough-love strategy for rescuing faltering Southeast Asian economies, picking on the IMF has become a parlor game in Washington. Isolationist conservatives decry the use of mostly U.S. funds to bail out foreign nations mired in bad debt; isolationist Democrats rail against the support given to companies that will take jobs from American workers; market purists argue that capitalism should be allowed to mete out harsh judgments without interference.

The real question, though, is not whether the IMF should intervene to save these economies, but how. And while the gist of the IMF strategy—cutting government spending, slashing infrastructure projects, forcing debt payments, opening up markets and business to outsiders—seems to make sense in strictly economic terms, the crisis in Southeast Asia is not strictly economic. Nations like Indonesia are on the brink of political crisis, as well. And pursuing the IMF strategy could push them over the edge.

Indeed, although demonstrations have died down, tensions in Indonesia remain high. This past weekend, reports of shopping panics persisted despite the seemingly restored calm. Suharto's hold on power still seems fragile, and the Indonesian media have been sharply critical of IMF measures. A senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies told reporters last Wednesday he anticipates more strife. According to *The New York Times*, even the IMF now believes its strategy may have been too aggressive.

What went wrong? The fundamental problem for the IMF is the assumption that the capitalist systems it is rescuing in Indonesia and elsewhere are destined to remain capitalist. It's a tempting thought, given the collapse of communism and even moderate socialism throughout Europe and most of Asia. But capitalism is a tricky and untidy beast. Just 60 years ago, even U.S. policymakers twisted and bent and buttressed capitalism in an effort to save it from self-destruction.

Today, however, the lessons of the 1920s and 1930s seem lost. While current IMF policy smacks of Hooverism—combinations of tight fiscal policy and austere monetary policy—with just a few exceptions, commentators in the U.S. have denied that there are any parallels between now and then. Rather than precipitating another economic crisis, they insist belt-tightening will force struggling Asian countries to make good on bad debts and invest more wisely, paving the way for sustained growth that will benefit a larger portion of the citizenry.

For a nation like South Korea, this strategy is reasonable. The South Korean economy is the eleventh-largest in the world, which means many of its citizens have incentive to repair the ailing system. It will be difficult, and, for a nation with only a brief history of democracy, the prospects for social backlash are certainly real enough. But many segments of the population have tasted the wealth that capitalism produces—average yearly income has grown from under $1,000 to more than $10,000 in the last 30 years—and they will work hard to retain as much of it as possible. (It helps that the flaws of anti-capitalism are on such prominent display only a few miles away in famine-stricken North Korea.)

Indonesia, however, is another matter. On the one hand, the impact of its downward spiral on the global economy will be limited: its gross domestic product pales next to South Korea's. On the other hand, Indonesia's political and social dynamic is far more complex—and important—to policymakers. Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation in the world, and it's a volatile mix: Muslims, many of them fundamentalist, dominate the military, while ethnic Chinese dominate the business sector.

Certainly plenty of Indonesia's problems come from within. The government is repressive and rife with cronyism; Suharto and his family control numerous business interests. The military has dealt harshly with dissidents, most notoriously in the East Timor region.

But the IMF's actions could easily exacerbate these internal tensions. While Indonesians are searching for food on the shelves, the Indonesian media have been criticizing the IMF for protecting only outside lenders. In the U.S., most experts dismiss the possibility that unrest could topple the Suharto regime, noting that since Suharto has already done away with his enemies, there's no credible rival for power. But just 30 years ago, Indonesia was a cauldron of political turmoil with every

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faction battling for control of the nation.

Of course, driving Suharto from power might not sound like such a bad idea—and, in the long run, it's in everyone's interest to see democracy flourish in Indonesia. But, at least in the short term, social anarchy would hardly solve Indonesia's economic problems. If Suharto's family falls from power, the military would likely step in, and its increasingly fundamentalist Muslim leadership would likely rule just as repressively as the Suharto family has.

IMF defenders counter such concerns by citing the surprising success of IMF austerity measures in Mexico. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, for one, points out that Mexico repaid its debt early—and argues that the IMF action hastened the recovery from the peso episode. But look closer: in the outer provinces of Mexico, the IMF solution—which preserved the entrenched power structure and amplified class divisions—has inflamed guerrilla movements, giving the Zapatistas of Chiapas a cause to sustain them for years. The Chiapas massacre fed on the IMF's brand of salvation—bitter medicine for the masses, guarantees for the financial markets—and the same could easily happen in Indonesia, only on a much vaster scale given its vast population.

With all of this in mind, it might be better to take things slower when it comes to Indonesia. The IMF should not demand so much austerity, monitor the progress of economic reforms, and find a way to encourage Suharto to exit the stage in a graceful manner that allows a smooth transition to more democratic rule. Also, IMF fixers should find a way to return some autonomy to Indonesian decision-makers. Otherwise, the IMF could find itself dealing with myriad political and social problems in a nation stretching across thousands of tiny islands. The resources required to fix a worsening situation would become enormous—and all for little benefit, given Indonesia's small role in the global economy.

But the IMF should not limit its introspection to Indonesia: it's time for a more fundamental rethinking of the consensus, shared by most experts and academics, as to how to manage the global economy. The obsession with killing inflation has led to the promotion of all policies anti-inflationary, especially fiscal austerity and aggressive monetary policies. This indeed has led to remarkably low inflation. And some have already begun to argue that whiffs of deflation are now emerging: commodities prices, especially gold, can't seem to find price support in the financial markets. Deflation is a particularly deadly economic reality in which falling prices make it more profitable to close businesses than to continue operating.

In Indonesia, the rapid increase in manufacturing capacity and construction and plunging real-estate prices have led to sharp deflationary pressures. The same can be said for Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan. But, instead of allowing these countries to grow out of their difficulties, the IMF is preaching monetary tightness and fiscal fasting. Defenders of the IMF argue that the agency is acting to kill off an infection that is not yet a viral threat to the entire system—in other words, the analogy to the pre-depression era doesn't hold. Moreover, they contend, the capacity and deflationary policies stem from excessive growth in the past.

But these pro-austerity advocates are pushing nations to the opposite extreme rather than to a sensible middle ground. This reflects a frightening myopia. And, although Indonesia is a faraway place, one wonders how isolated it really is. Last week, U.S. newspapers trumpeted the expectation that the U.S. budget deficit would disappear sooner than expected, the apparent result of fiscal restraint and monetary austerity. The economy seems robust right now, but one wonders if in five or ten years we will rue our zeal to cut budgets and kill nonexistent inflation. Who knows—we might even need somebody to bail *us* out.

DAVE KANSAS is editor-in-chief of *TheStreet.com*.

Bibi and Bill: a primer.

SCUTTLE DIPLOMACY

By Robert Satloff

There is an air of apprehension about Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington this week; once again, the U.S. seems dismayed at Israel's behavior toward its Arab neighbors. From Suez to Osiraq, from Lebanon to Oslo, Israel's vision of security and peace has at times surprised, annoyed, and even angered Washington. Conversely, on a wide array of negotiating issues—from talking to the Palestine Liberation Organization to the legality of Jewish settlements to the future of Jerusalem—Israel could never assume that Washington supported its views.

But, in one very important respect, the current situation is different. Traditionally, America's role in the peace process was to be maître d', waiter, maybe even the guy who picked up the tab—but never guest of honor. Although the U.S. has at times entered into actual negotiations, as it did at Camp David, it has usually kept some distance, as a way to reconcile the seemingly contradictory roles as Israel's strategic ally and an honest broker of peace, and nurture an environment in which Israelis and Arabs could develop mutual trust. Even the late Yitzhak Rabin, whose relationship with Bill Clinton was marked by unprecedented warmth and candor, never gave American officials a seat at the table.

That changed in 1997: today, the U.S. plays a more vital and interventionist role in Arab-Israeli peacemaking than it has at any time during the past decade. To be sure,

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the Israeli-Palestinian relationship would now be far worse—and possibly far more violent—if the U.S. had not become so involved. But, as the process lumbers toward the "final status talks"—negotiations over such controversial core issues as Jerusalem, refugees, and so on—making U.S. officials responsible for drafting accords and arbitrating disagreements on tactical security matters is problematic, if not downright counterproductive.

Ironically, it was Netanyahu himself who opened the door to a more expansive U.S. role. Although his campaign rhetoric was viscerally critical of the Oslo accords, Netanyahu came to office in June 1996 committed to salvaging them. Specifically, he said he wanted to lower the inflated expectations of Israeli concessions that, he claimed, the Labor Party had fed the Palestinians. Arafat read this as a de facto retreat from the "partnership" he enjoyed with Labor, and he let loose the wrath of the Palestinian street as soon as the Israelis provided a suitable excuse—the September 1996 opening of the Hasmonean tunnel in Jerusalem. Rioting degenerated into fierce street battles between Palestinian police and Israeli troops.

Although full-scale warfare was averted, Israel and the Palestinian Authority were left with virtually no points of contact. Even the Israeli military and security officials, who had maintained ties at the darkest moments of Palestinian terrorism, felt betrayed by their counterparts' acquiescence to (and actual endorsement of) live fire on Israeli soldiers. At a hastily arranged summit meeting in Washington in October 1996, Netanyahu asked Clinton for help in resuscitating the Israeli-Palestinian relationship.

The administration dispatched determined and creative peace shuttler Dennis Ross. He soon negotiated the Hebron accord—under which the Israelis agreed to withdraw substantially from Judaism's second holiest city—as well as an appended U.S.-authored document outlining a "road map" for Israeli and Palestinian mutual commitments called the "Note for the Record." In retrospect, not one of those commitments has been fulfilled to mutual satisfaction: the Palestinians even deny the validity of obligations to complete the revision of the Palestinian Charter, halve the size of the Palestinian police, and cease all official Palestinian Authority activity in Jerusalem. However, approval of the note overcame a diplomatic obstacle then thought insurmountable, and Ross became indispensable.

Just as Palestinian rioting led to a new U.S. role in the diplomacy of the peace process, the first wave of anti-Israel terrorism under the Likud government, during the summer of 1997, opened the door to a new U.S. role in the security aspects of the peace process. Before the terrorism, the absence of full-fledged cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority had never been a front-burner issue. When suicide bombs went off in July and September, Netanyahu turned to Washington to help fix the security-cooperation problem.

The answer was to cast an intermediary between Israeli and Palestinian security chiefs—the CIA's Tel Aviv Station Chief Stanley Moscowitz. Moscowitz (no relative of the wealthy Miami financier of Jewish real estate in Jerusalem) was given the added task of monitoring Palestinian security activities. For example, Israel had claimed for months that Palestinian Authority prisons were "revolving doors" which incarcerated terrorists on Mondays and released them on Tuesdays. Under the new rules, decisions on prisoner releases were vetted through Moscowitz, with input from Israeli security officials.

So, in effect, what was a flawed bilateral relationship under Labor has now become a flawed trilateral relationship under Likud, with far less joint Israeli-Palestinian responsibility. On a day-to-day basis, the gears of the relationship do not turn without U.S. knowledge and input. And, under this setup, Washington serves as Arafat's de facto advocate—a huge achievement for the Palestinian leader—while CIA officers find themselves straying from the realm of intelligence into policy. Even if all parties have entered into this new arrangement with open eyes and good will, this will surely complicate U.S.-Israeli ties and make Arab-Israeli reconciliation more difficult.

To understand why, consider the imbroglio over "further redeployments." According to the original Oslo accords, Israel must make three "further redeployments" from West Bank territory, after which Israel's presence would be limited to "specified military locations" and Jewish settlements. From that position, final decisions about the border between Israel and a Palestinian entity would be made. The accords do not require redeployments of any particular size; Rabin insisted that Israel alone determine the extent of the withdrawals.

Shortly after the signing of the Hebron accord, the U.S. endorsed this Israeli position in a letter to Netanyahu from then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Two months later, in March 1997, the Israeli Cabinet approved, with grudging U.S. endorsement, a redeployment that included 9.1 percent of the West Bank, only 2.1 percent of which was territory the Palestinians had previously maintained no jurisdiction over. Although the accords do not give the Palestinian Authority the right to reject the Israeli decision, it did so, and the redeployment was never implemented.

When Netanyahu comes to Washington this week, there will be a test of wills over the future of these redeployments. He and his Cabinet colleagues don't like them in principle; as even some former Labor Party negotiators admit, redeployments force Israel to give up key territorial bargaining chips in advance of the "final status talks." Netanyahu's preference, therefore, is to offer a single further redeployment, larger than the March proposal, and to convince Clinton to compel Arafat to refocus the negotiations on "final status talks"—themselves long overdue—with the third redeployment promise being "rolled into"

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Israel's ultimate and final withdrawal.

For its part, the Clinton administration has publicly stated its expectation that Israel will undertake a "significant and credible" redeployment—terms that do not exist in the Oslo lexicon—that would combine the aborted March redeployment and the delayed second redeployment, with an additional redeployment in mid-1998. No one will say publicly what would make a redeployment "significant and credible"; like former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart on obscenity, everyone will know it when they see it.

To a certain extent, this is a game of bluff. With the resignation of the relatively moderate Foreign Minister David Levy, the chances that Netanyahu can wrangle any redeployment through his center-right-religious Cabinet are slim. But given all that he has survived in his 18 months as premier, it is not impossible. Although Washington is committed to all three redeployments under the same Christopher letter that Netanyahu welcomed so heartily exactly a year ago, twisting Netanyahu's arm regarding the redeployments now might provide the Israeli leader with a winning platform on which to launch a re-election bid—a prospect that makes most U.S. officials shudder.

The key question is not whether Clinton will take the advice of some in the American Jewish community who, armed with self-validating poll data, have been lobbying him to exert pressure on Netanyahu until he either bends or breaks. A shrewd politician who is also the first president to appreciate the U.S.-Israeli relationship both intellectually and emotionally, Clinton probably won't follow advice that so cuts against his grain. Rather, the key question is, what about Arafat? He's missing from the equation because, in the new trilateral setup, negotiations are really bilateral—between Washington and Jerusalem. Though Arafat will visit Clinton just two days after Netanyahu, he has become a background player, in some respects a dependent variable. Similarly, monitoring Palestinian Authority—its commitment to democracy, fighting corruption, compliance with Oslo—is merely a subplot in the larger drama of U.S.-Israeli give-and-take.

If tensions on such technical issues as redeployments have already strained the U.S.-Israeli relationship to the point that Clinton refused to meet Netanyahu in November (although the Israeli's airplane was parked next to Air Force One on a Los Angeles runway), they are sure to worsen when negotiations turn to the most basic issues of land, peace, and security later this year. Those talks will pit the emerging Likud-Labor consensus—retaining all of Jerusalem and at least a third of the West Bank—against the so far immovable Palestinian demand for a piece of Jerusalem and all of the West Bank. Under these circumstances, how America juggles the roles of ally, advocate, and judge will pose serious tests to both the strength of the U.S.-Israeli relationship and the fate of the peace process.

ROBERT SATLOFF is the executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Repent ye insensitive oilmen.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION AT TEXACO

By Hanna Rosin

Edward Gadsden, Texaco's director of equal employment and diversity, is explaining how to simulate the pain of exclusion. "One employee leaves the room and stands outside the door," Gadsden says, describing one of the many role-playing games that make up the oil company's revamped diversity program. "Meanwhile, the other employees in the room form a circle and close ranks, holding hands or standing shoulder to shoulder. When the person comes back in the room, the people in the circle ignore him. They talk and laugh for about five minutes, and pay no attention to the person outside."

Four years ago, before Texaco convulsed into a symbol of American corporate racism, Edward Gadsden was hired to develop what's known in business circles as a diversity strategy. At first, the program was a routine, surgical affair, designed to teach the company's top executives practical tips for managing a diverse workforce. Then, in late 1996, after the world thought they heard the tape recordings of Texaco executives using racial slurs, Gadsden hunkered down for a crash redesign.

Now, all 20,000 employees are required to attend and soak up a more ambitious lesson—the human dimension of ignoring differences or what it *feels* like to be left out of the circle. "You get people begging to get in the circle. Afterwards, some of them feel really bad that none of their friends went to bat for them." The insiders, meanwhile, feel smug satisfaction, followed by waves

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of guilt. "At first they say they felt pretty good being on the inside. Then they remember times when they felt rejected. Like one person remembered the day he went to church, and he was Jewish, but nobody knew it, so he felt like he was just in the wrong place." Other important differences emerge, like "the fact that someone is short and another person is tall. That one person grew up in New York, and another person grew up in Texas."

Of course, when the scandal first broke in 1996, it had nothing to do with circles of exclusion, or short people, or Jews, or Texans. On November 4, *The New York Times* ran a front-page story quoting a recording of several Texaco executives referring to black employees as "niggers" and "black jelly beans." One week later, the *Times* amended the story. The tape the reporter had heard was a crude copy; on the original, no one said "nigger." The sentence the reporter thought was "Now we have Kwanzaa.... (Laughter.) Fucking niggers, they shitted all over us with this," actually was "I lost Christmas, poor St. Nicholas, they shitted all over his beard."

The tape was leaked to the *Times* reporter by someone at the law firm representing plaintiffs in a class action discrimination suit pending against Texaco. The suit had languished for two years in an obscure White Plains courtroom. Eleven days after the first *Times* story broke, Texaco settled. The company shelled out $115 million to black employees—the largest amount ever awarded in a discrimination suit. Texaco also agreed to a one-time eleven percent pay raise for all black employees; the average total award was about $70,000 per person.

The money was unprecedented only in degree. The settlement's most radical provision was something else: Texaco's decision to do penance. The company agreed to establish an independent "Equality and Tolerance Task Force" with Deval Patrick, former assistant attorney general for civil rights, in charge of monitoring hiring and promotions for the subsequent five years. It also agreed to carry out a cultural transformation by implementing new "company-wide diversity and sensitivity" programs.

Whether or not Texaco would have settled the suit without the *Times* story is unclear. While the plaintiffs had documented a long and nasty history of racist incidents at Texaco even without the tapes, class action discrimination suits are notoriously hard to win. Yet, once the *Times* story appeared, Texaco CEO Peter Bijur quickly adopted a strategy known in public-relations circles as "total contrition." With p.r. maven Linda Robinson at his side, Bijur issued a series of tortured apologies. "We care about each and every employee," he said on a satellite broadcast. "I care deeply.... I am sorry for our employees and both ashamed and angry that such a thing happened in the Texaco family."

Within two weeks, he turned the nightmare into an opportunity for enlightenment. He met with Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton and asked for their help in making Texaco a "model of diversity." He bravely shouldered the historical burden. "The moment is now, and the responsibility is ours to demonstrate to the nation that discrimination can be eradicated. That true inclusion can exist. And that equal opportunity can be provided to every man and woman," he said, sounding totally contrite at a November 15, 1996, press conference. "We will work ceaselessly and tirelessly, day after day, to build a company of undisputed opportunity for all individuals."

One year later, the task force is ready to release its first evaluation, and Patrick has already declared himself "pleased with our progress." According to the company's nine-month report, 50 percent of new U.S. hires were women, and 38 percent were minorities. Managers who fail to meet expectations risk being docked bonus pay. But statistics aren't the real story. "Sure, I can go out and hire people to make numbers work," Bijur recently told the *Times*. But that wouldn't prove that the company had really changed, that it was ready to become a role model for corporate America. Instead, Bijur insists, the proof of Texaco's dedication is its ground-up cultural transformation, the new atmosphere in every Texaco cubicle and lunchroom across the nation. In offices from White Plains to Houston, the company now bombards employees with Orwellian reminders to "respect the individual," Texaco's new diversity mantra.

That Texaco will indeed set an example seems beyond question. The Texaco case "had a huge, huge impact," says Mauricio Velasquez, one of the nation's most popular diversity trainers. The week the scandal broke, the hits on his website tripled, and interest in his services hasn't diminished much since. "Texaco put a price tag on ignoring these issues," he said. "What Anita Hill did for sexual harassment, Texaco did for diversity training."

But here the legacy that Texaco seems bent on leaving is rather troubling. In his zeal for redemption, Bijur has replaced the company's small-scale, relatively benign, and occasionally constructive diversity program with one that seeks to transform the company's collective consciousness—an initiative reminiscent of the older, cruder diversity-training models many critics rightly condemned as futile if not poisonous. Conservatives believe that Bijur is working this transformation because he's a slave to the "diversity trap." ("Who can blame the poor man for saying such things with a gun to his head?" Dinesh D'Souza asked recently.) But it's not as simple as that. Like most CEOs who institute diversity training, Bijur is a willing partner with the diversity industry, too busy recasting himself as America's corporate healer to grasp the folly and cynicism inherent in the re-education business.

If any company should have known to be wary of such an exercise, it was Texaco, since resentment of past enlightenment efforts was what sparked all of the nastiness in the first place. On the infamous tapes, executives blurt out their resentment over Black History Month, Kwanzaa celebrations, the black national anthem, and efforts to recruit more minorities. One executive recalls how he walked out of a company celebration when a modified national anthem, meant for black employees, came on. Because "they sat, during ours," he said, "as though they're not included, and stood for their modified one ... I will apologize to nobody for walking out of there." "Black jelly beans" is a reference to a metaphor

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used by R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr., a well-known diversity guru. "This diversity thing. You know how black jelly beans agree," says one of the executives.

Today, Gadsden distances himself from Thomas: "I want to make this clear," he says. "We did not draw anything from Thomas." The executives, he explains, picked up the jelly-bean metaphor at a lecture given by Thomas in 1993 at an oil industry conference, not at internal training sessions. But, in a sense, Gadsden and Texaco could have learned something from Thomas, who, as the founder of the American Institute for Managing Diversity, teaches that affirmative action is obsolete—that it will eventually give way to gradual, natural integration. Thomas defines himself as an alternative to the gurus of personal transformation, preaching instead a practical, top-down method for preparing organizations for the coming change.

Before the tape scandal, Texaco's training program drew heavily from Thomas's teachings, consciously or not. Now it owes more to gurus like Lewis Griggs, a New Age moralist from California dedicated to doing the "inner work" of diversity training. Griggs's style calls for employees to talk, share, bond. Texaco's new program is a throwback to these early days of diversity training, when adults embarrassed themselves in role-playing games, and diversity classes felt like A. A. sessions, only mandatory.

The first day of Texaco's two-day "learning experience" is Awareness Day. Employees are expected to get in touch with their "negative assumptions," explains Gadsden, and learn how their behavior influences others. At the end of the day, each employee writes a "personal action plan"—a strategy for changing daily behavior. (I will listen more closely to people. I will make a new friend.) Enlightenment comes by metaphor, through simulated exercises like the circle-of-difference game Gadsden described. In another game, each participant gets a card with the same sentence written on it and is told to count the number of times the letter f appears. People then divide into groups depending on how many f's they find; most people, it turns out, do not notice the f in "of." The two groups then defend their respective "positions," although it's hard to see how the larger group could rig up an argument for what is basically a trick of the eye. The point is to demonstrate that the majority can be wrong. "I didn't get a lot out of it," says Beatrice Hester, one of the plaintiffs in the class action suit who still works at the Houston office. "These were pretty obvious things I already understood."

Given the personal insults on the tape, it might be argued that Texaco's regression to the personal-growth school makes sense. After all, employees, both black and white, might harbor residual anger about the scandal, and it might help to air some of those feelings in a semi-public setting. Unfortunately, the one subject trainers are instructed to avoid is the tapes, and the one emotion they are supposed to shun is anger. In one exercise, employees must write down assumptions about someone else in the group they don't know, based on the other person's appearance. The exercise has the potential to get nasty, but trainers are instructed to avoid discomfort. Thus, Gadsden says, proper examples include "went to Wellesley, conservative, probably prissy," while improper examples include, say, "shiftless and lazy" as descriptions of a black colleague. "We don't call each other names," says Gadsden. "We only do the polite stuff."

Not surprisingly, such enforced politeness gets suffocating. "They didn't want us to talk about Texaco or anything that actually happened," says Hester. "The attitude is it's over and done with, let's move on. But some people who knew each other for years have stopped talking to each other." Glenn Gooding, one of Texaco's trainers, claims that "people are willing to discuss things very openly." But are they? One of the people in his class was Marsha Harris, also a plaintiff in the suit. Gooding ended class by telling participants that while they would learn a lot, they wouldn't walk out singing "Kumbaya." Harris complained to the company about Gooding's flippancy, and the incident made it into a local paper. When I asked Gooding about it, he clammed up. "If this is going to be a negative article I'd just as soon not be quoted at all," he snapped. Gooding takes his cue from Texaco executives, who told Harris she was "making a big deal out of this," recalls Hester. (Harris is out of the country.)

On day two, the lesson broadens. Employees learn that diversity is crucial to business in an increasingly global marketplace. Instructors use a training video called "A Peacock in the Land of Penguins," a cartoon based on a book by diversity trainers B.J. Hateley and Warren Schmidt. The video opens with an introduction by Hateley, wearing a bright printed silk jacket and dangly earrings, inviting anyone watching to "come with us into the land of penguins and see if any of these birds remind you of yourself or people you know in your organization."

The penguins are a stuffy lot, "not always wise and not always popular, but they were always in charge." ("This meeting will come to order," says one in a pompous William F. Buckley voice.) The other birds are smart and creative; they bombard the penguins with new and innovative ideas, "but never quite made it into key positions." No matter how hard they try, "the penguins felt more comfortable around each other." (At one point, a tear rolls down a starling's cheek.) Then, one day, crazed wolves with bloodshot eyes show up, poised for a takeover. The penguins are "slow and bureaucratic" as the menacing wolves move in. Only Perry the Peacock recognizes the urgency and organizes a plan of action. The good birds lead a flock to a hilltop, stomp, and howl like banshees, setting off an avalanche that crushes the wolves.

If employees are not insulted by the fourth-grade language of the cartoon, they will be by its stereotypes. The worker birds wear dashiki-like outfits "reflecting their jobs and lifestyles." Perry the Peacock is "bright and colorful and noisy" and happens to wear the green and yellow colors of Africa. He is "creative and imaginative," and his voice is "too loud." The penguins complain that his feathers are "too flashy." Sarah the Swan is "so soft-spoken that the penguins never listened to her."

"Managing Diversity," a video that attempts to depict tensions in a fictitious multicultural office, is equally

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stocked with stereotypes. The white men are named Bob and Ken. One of them says loudly in a hallway, as others pass him, that "we've got a lot of Asians back in corporate. They are really great on the technical side" but "creativity and innovation is just not their strong suit." The video's one Asian man is stiff and overly apologetic, governed by the traditions of humility and selflessness espoused by Confucius. One woman portrayed in the video is a quiet, mousy redhead, the human incarnation of Sarah the Swan.

The underlying theme of this jumbled "learning experience" is a synergy between employee behavior and the organization's success. If employees feel depressed and isolated, they will not produce, and Texaco's stock will drop. Discrimination is bad for business. Or, in more practical terms, "if you are a white male manager and you are drilling in Angola and you devalue your employees because they are black, you are not going to successfully drill oil," explains Texaco consultant William Adams.

A cynic might see Texaco's emphasis on its employees' personal growth as a diversionary ploy. After all, at the very moment Texaco's managers are squirming under media scrutiny, the company excises the focus on management from its diversity programs. The burden now lies not with managers who hire and promote minorities, but with all employees and their inner selves.

Indeed, the company is officially backtracking. "I do not admit, nor do I accept the fact that the programs we had in place were flawed in any way," Bijur recently told *The New York Times*. Three spokesmen reminded me that various diversity efforts were instituted in December, a month before the settlement was signed. But in fact the terms were settled in November, according to plaintiffs' attorney; January was merely the official signing date. Phase two of Total Contrition is deflect all blame.

Bijur is merely proving himself a model student. Any guru of effective management, from Stephen Covey back to Norman Vincent Peale, knows that dwelling on sin is merely a roadblock in the path to improvement, that the journey inward is a waste of time if it can't come up with the goods. And Bijur is already adopting the trappings of a spiritual counselor. Spokesmen like to recount how Bijur had his own epiphany in a training course and wants to share it with others. The shepherd leads his troops to salvation, and they follow. After the course, employees fill out evaluation forms. Gadsden is proud to report that 95 percent of employees rate the classes a four or five on a five-point scale.

"If you think what happened at Texaco couldn't happen anywhere you're wrong," says Gadsden. "Companies are a mirror of society." Except that society is messy, and the pain can't be wished away through circles of difference. The earliest generation of diversity trainers failed for a reason. As civil rights holdouts, they referred to themselves as "recovering racists, sexists, and classists," as Griggs likes to say. But racism and sexism are bummers and do not fit into the glossy universe of corporate p.r. Companies, after all, are built not to inspire personal transformations, but to turn a profit. And perhaps it's better that way. We can make our transformations at home. •

Espy and the criminalization of politics.

PROSECUTORIAL INDISCRETION

By David Grann

Across the National Mall from the Department of Agriculture, not far from the U.S. Capitol, sits a spartan courthouse. Inside are 24 courtrooms, each as sadly unexceptional as the criminal defendants inside them. On this day in December, for example, an alleged crack dealer is on trial in Courtroom 21, an accused gun runner in Courtroom 11. But in Courtroom 12, there waits a very different sort of defendant: the man who served as U.S. secretary of Agriculture from 1993 through 1994.

According to the massive indictment against him, Michael Espy accepted $35,000 worth of gifts from companies he was regulating—gifts that included free Super Bowl tickets, a new set of luggage, limo rides, a pass to the U.S. Open, and a Waterford crystal bowl. Prosecutors claim he also tried to "cover up and disguise" his illegal activities by lying to investigators.

To the city's growing industry of ethics cops and watchdog groups, the case of *The United States of America v. Alphonso Michael Espy* has become a watershed event—a monument to the complex web of regulations constructed in the wake of Watergate to eradicate even the most picayune corruption. "It's proof that the new ethics laws work and are taken seriously," enthuses Bob Schiff of Ralph Nader's Public Citizen. Gary Ruskin of the Congressional Accountability Project adds: "It's a high-point in whether or not we have the rule of law in the United States."

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Yet, what really makes this case so important is its unimportance, its sheer triviality. Unlike in Abscam or Teapot Dome, there is little, if any, evidence that the man at the center of this scandal ever committed true, old-fashioned bribery: taking money in exchange for favors. Instead, Espy could be facing more than 100 years in prison for the appearance of impropriety, for simply taking gifts. To prove this, Donald Smaltz, the independent prosecutor, has spent more than three years and $11.9 million in taxpayers' money. He has trampled over witnesses who never even knew Espy, subpoenaed documents dating back to Jimmy Carter's term in office, and convicted a slew of low-level lobbyists and aides.

The irony is that, before Smaltz stepped in, the democratic system had exacted its own eloquent justice without the blunt instrument of the independent counsel or the new ethics laws. As they used to say, the system worked: *The Wall Street Journal* ferreted out the scandal, Republicans threatened hearings, and public pressure mounted on President Clinton to do something or face retribution at the polls. On October 3, 1994, he did, accepting Espy's resignation. The result was that a man once touted to become the first elected black governor of Mississippi slinked back home disgraced, his career, for all intents and purposes, over. Espy's fate is testimony to the lingering power of one of the most effective and traditional forms of punishment: social opprobrium.

But in the new America, where all politics is litigated, this is not enough. The Espy case shows the extent to which watchdog groups, the press, and ordinary Americans have blurred the distinction between real corruption and faux corruption, between creeps and criminals, between law and morality. Whereas the old ethics system meted out a complex array of punishments, from humiliation all the way to incarceration, the new laws have reduced everything to an either/or standard—to guilt or innocence, jail time or exoneration. And, perhaps most dangerously, they have enabled politicians to use the law not as a means of justice but as a means of destroying one another.

Nowhere is this devolution and this degradation clearer than in the use, and misuse, of the independent prosecutor. And nowhere is the criminalization of American politics more in evidence than in the work of Donald Smaltz. In a single stroke, the 60-year-old prosecutor has redefined corruption in a way that would turn most lawmakers into lawbreakers overnight.

In 1994, a stranger cornered Yvonne McDaniel, a 54-year-old widow, outside her home in San Francisco and handed her a small, white envelope. Inside was a subpoena ordering her to appear before a D.C. grand jury investigating Michael Espy. Though she had only read about Espy in the papers and had never heard of Donald Smaltz, the man who had sent her the subpoena, she did what she thought any good citizen would do: she boarded a plane for the capital. In Washington, she says, Smaltz's attorneys interrogated her for hours—but not about gratuities to the former Agriculture secretary. Instead, they wanted to know whether she had seen anybody use drugs during cruises she had once taken with her friend, Don Tyson, the senior chairman of Tyson Foods, who had allegedly given Espy NFL playoff tickets; and whether, during those trips, there had been any prostitution or homosexual activity on board. "It was like they were just fishing for anything," she recalls. "They only asked me at the very end if I had ever met Michael Espy, and I said no."

Since grand jury testimony is sealed, it is impossible to verify McDaniel's account. But witnesses from around the country—and even Smaltz's own investigators—recount similar stories. Together they present not only a portrait of a prosecutor running amok, but also a case study in how the independent counsel—once intended to insulate the law from politics—has pushed the law deeper and more dangerously into politics and into the private lives of Americans. While ordinary prosecutors are forced to juggle cases, to stay within a budget, and to report to superiors, independent counsels have virtually no boundaries, save their imaginations.

When Smaltz was appointed on September 9, 1994, he predicted he'd wrap up his investigation in no more than a year. After all, the main details of the case had already been outlined in *The Wall Street Journal*; and, unlike Iran-Contra, there had been no massive shredding of documents or attempt by the White House to cover up anything. Shortly after his pronouncement, however, Smaltz moved his burgeoning team of more than 30 lawyers and investigators and assistants from their windowless basement office near the Capitol into more spacious quarters in Alexandria, Virginia. He also opened up branch offices in states across the country, including California, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Rather than simply build his case against Espy, Smaltz tried to build multiple cases against individuals who were only tangentially, if at all, involved in the matter at hand. These included Espy's brother, Henry, a small-town mayor who had never worked for Mike and who nearly went bankrupt fending off charges that he had made false statements to a local bank—charges that were eventually thrown out of court before they even made it to a jury. Smaltz also began to hunt for new crimes, for something more than "just a handful of football tickets," as one of his former aides puts it.

In Fayetteville, Arkansas, near the home of President Clinton, Smaltz, a longtime Republican, set his broadest scope on Don Tyson, the chicken magnate and presidential patron whose company had lavished Espy with gifts. A former federal prosecutor of white-collar crimes with a penchant for leather jackets and Harley Davidsons, Smaltz concocted an ingenious scheme to find informants: he subpoenaed the names of more than 2,000 Tyson workers who had filed injury claims against the company. Some of the complaints dated as far back as 1990, three years before Clinton or Espy had even taken office.

Armed with a list of disgruntled employees, Smaltz's agents fanned out across the state. Just before Thanksgiving in 1994, two FBI agents showed up on the doorstep of Dorothy Carter, a 60-year-old chicken packer who had

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injured her elbow on the job. According to her sworn affidavit and *The Washington Post*, agents hammered her with questions about whether Tyson had ever given meat inspectors free chickens or cleaned their cars. Then they asked if she had ever socialized with members of Tyson's family. And then, when she said that she had seen them occasionally, they asked if she knew how Don Tyson's brother, who reputedly choked to death in the late 1980s, had *really* died. "I got the impression ... they were simply trying to dig up anything they could find," says Carter.

Some agents complained personally to Smaltz about the breadth of the probe. But the investigation only seemed to widen. Just before Christmas, three FBI agents tracked down Ken Gates, a pilot who last flew for Tyson Foods *16 years* ago—when Espy was fresh out of college. Though he said he didn't know anything about illegal gratuities, they returned a few weeks later with a subpoena ordering him to appear before a grand jury in Washington. (As with Yvonne McDaniel, the government reimbursed him for his airfare, at taxpayers' expense.) Smaltz, wearing his trademark Archibald Cox bow tie, interrogated Gates personally. But, according to Gates, he didn't ask any questions about Espy or the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Instead, he asked Gates whether Tyson Foods had ever bribed any *foreign* officials.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Only a few weeks old, the search began to draw fierce criticism from Tyson officials. But Smaltz believed that he had finally found something bigger than football tickets or crystal bowls—something that would justify his mushrooming investigation. During three days of interrogation, Joseph Henrickson, a former Tyson pilot, told agents that during the 1980s he had flown envelopes stuffed with $100 bills from Tyson's headquarters in northwest Arkansas to Little Rock. The money, he believed, was subsequently delivered to then-Governor Bill Clinton. It was an astonishing allegation. And Smaltz was so enraptured by it that days later he broke ordinary rules of confidentiality concerning uncorroborated testimony and breathlessly told *Time* magazine that the charges had "a ring of truth."

The outburst unleashed speculation in the press that the president might be implicated and sent investigators swarming once again. In Indianapolis, two agents surrounded a stunned Haskell Blake, Henrickson's former coworker. He called the allegations "a bunch of crap"—an assessment Henrickson's other colleagues apparently shared. "The investigation was getting totally out of control," concedes one agent who was working on the case at the time. "We were wasting taxpayers' dollars looking for x, y, and z, while all the Espy stuff was just sitting there."

Indeed, by the new year, only four months after his appointment, everyone, it seemed, was trying to restrain Smaltz. Justice Department officials lectured him about exceeding his authority; Espy's lawyers accused him of violating the Constitution; and, according to *Time*, Whitewater Independent Prosecutor Kenneth M. Starr warned him to stay on his own turf. By the spring of 1995, the complaints reverberated as far as San Francisco, where agents from one of Smaltz's branch offices were investigating Richard Douglas, a Sun-Diamond Growers executive who had allegedly given Espy U.S. Open tickets and limo rides. Despite the seemingly low stakes involved, Smaltz subpoenaed all of Douglas's phone charges since 1987—more than six years before Espy became Agriculture secretary; he also subpoenaed Douglas's passports dating back to 1978 as well as his federal and state income tax returns.

The well-respected, if obscure, Los Angeles attorney seemed to relish his newfound powers. On the back of his office door, Smaltz posted in huge block letters one of Plato's laws: "The servants of the nation are to render their services without any taking of presents ... the disobedient shall, if convicted, die without ceremony." He handed out watches to his staff emblazoned with the independent counsel seal, his name, and the words IN RE MICHAEL ESPY. During a heated conference call with his attorneys, the former Army airborne paratrooper

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dropped down and did 20 pushups while still barking into the receiver. "He's the kind of guy that if he were after you, and you cut off both his legs *and* both his arms, he'd keep coming," says George Newhouse, an assistant U.S. attorney in Los Angeles who has worked with Smaltz. "He's unstoppable."

Finally, one judge tried. In a highly unusual move against an independent prosecutor, Chief District Court Judge John Garrett Penn spent three weeks in June secretly quashing several portions of Smaltz's subpoenas, saying they were so broad as to be unreasonable. Yet, Smaltz forged on unfazed, even after two of his top prosecutors abruptly resigned over his conduct. In a stunning response to a defense attorney's petition, Michael Shaheen, the Justice Department's internal watchdog, confessed: "Your letter did provide information that might, with respect to an ordinary criminal case, cause this Office to initiate an inquiry into possible prosecutorial misconduct. However, as you are aware, an Independent Counsel bears a special relationship to the Department of Justice. . . ." Indeed, no independent counsel has ever been removed from office. "He's the judge, the jury and the executioner," complained GOP Congressman Jay Dickey of Arkansas. "We need somebody to rein him in."

During a rare interview, Smaltz says that he is merely doing his job, and that his critics are trivializing his record. "Anyone who prosecutes an opposing party is going to suffer their slings and arrows," he says, as the sounds of light jazz waft up from behind his desk. "Whatever criticism there was early on, I think we've vindicated ourselves." Indeed, unlike Starr, Smaltz has indicted his main quarry and convicted more than ten others. He has also recouped most of the taxpayers' money in fines, including, most recently, $6 million from Tyson Foods for giving Espy $12,000 in illegal gratuities. Sitting down under a colonial banner that says "Don't Tread On Me," Smaltz dons his pince-nez and points to the statute that specifically authorizes him to investigate not just Espy but "all matters related to that subject matter." "The fact is," he says, "this is Congress's commandment."

What is so frightening is that Smaltz is largely right. By unburdening prosecutors from traditional supervision, reformers thought that they would insulate investigations from the political connections that corrupted the Justice Department during Watergate. But, since its creation in 1978, the law has engendered its own kind of corruption. "It has anointed kings," says former New Hampshire Senator Warren Rudman, "in a land that doesn't believe in kings." Or, as Smaltz puts it: "I'm sort of like a little attorney general in a mini-kingdom."

Just how imperious are they? Since 1990, eight independent counsels have spent more than $80 million; one probe, begun nearly eight years ago to investigate corruption in the Reagan administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development, is still going on. According to a government audit in 1992, five of the nine independent counsels did not even comply with one of the few laws constraining them—accurately reporting their expenditures. Under what the auditor described as a "serious internal control weakness," costs spiraled during the Iran-Contra probe to more than $47 million. Even Smaltz, who has been relatively frugal by comparison, is accused of forcing staff to do personal chores around his house in a potential violation of the law. (Smaltz says that his staff was there to help guard the house from being bugged when a new cleaning service came.)

Yet money (and even occasional corruption) is not the real problem. Most Americans are willing to spend thousands, even millions of dollars, to put thugs, embezzlers, and truly venal politicians behind bars. The problem is proportionality. While the new ethics laws have criminalized more trivial offenses, the independent counsel law has removed the most important check on any prosecution: discretion. Whereas most prosecutors must discriminate between cases—to decide, say, whether to spend their time and money pursuing people who drive over the speed limit or mug old ladies—independent counsels have only one case, and nearly all the time and the money they need to pursue it. There is little incentive to stop investigating. And, as the investigation racks up costs, the pressure inevitably mounts to convict.

"This is not just expensive," says Joseph diGenova, who worked in the Reagan Justice Department and is a former independent prosecutor. "It's dangerous." For it often means lowering the threshold of what constitutes a prosecutable offense or finding new crimes. In the Espy case, Smaltz's lawyers went to such lengths to convict a lobbyist for perjury they failed to disclose that one of their main FBI witnesses had once committed perjury himself. The lobbyist's conviction was later overturned, and the case is being tried again. This time, Smaltz has also charged the lobbyist with improperly inviting an Agriculture official to attend a University of Arkansas basketball game. The value of the ticket: $13.

As the threshold of real corruption drops, there is also a frantic effort to inflate indictments, to make the new kind of political crimes seem much worse than they really are. In the Espy case, the indictment is truly epic: 39 counts and 51 pages. Smaltz uses the law like a mirror: distorting, bending, and refracting the alleged conduct until it seems heinous. In one instance, he charges Espy for a single gratuity under five separate statutes; in another, he jacks up the value of the gratuities by including $6,000 for four tickets to one of Clinton's inaugural dinners—even though Espy, as the president's Agriculture secretary, could have probably obtained the tickets for free.

More disturbingly, Smaltz radically reinterprets statutes to make them fit the case. When it was first revealed in the press that Espy had taken free gratuities, for example, he sent reimbursements to the companies through the mail. Rather than regard this as exculpatory evidence, however, Smaltz used this to charge him with an additional five counts under the Mail Fraud Act, which prohibits the use of the U.S. Postal Service for criminal deeds. In pretrial motions, a judge also dismissed three counts brought by Smaltz under the Meat Inspection

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Act—a law written in the era of Upton Sinclair to prevent the bribery of meat inspectors. The law, the judge noted dryly, had never applied to Cabinet secretaries who do not normally spend their days inspecting sirloin. "None of this should be criminal," explains Stan Brand, a former counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives and a veteran of corruption cases. "I'm not saying that Espy didn't do anything wrong. He took gifts; he should be forced out of his job, perhaps pay a fine. But should he go to jail? That's a quantum leap from where we are in the law."

Indeed, in his most audacious act, Smaltz has remade the law so that it will never impede prosecutors of similar cases again. While still pursuing Espy, Smaltz quietly indicted the Sun-Diamond Growers of California, an agriculture cooperative that had allegedly plied Espy with more than $9,000 worth of gifts. Smaltz based his case on the gratuity statute, which prohibits presents to public officials "for or because of any official act performed or to be performed by such public officials." In 1974, in *United States* v. *Brewster*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit made it expressly clear what this means: there must be proof that "the gratuity was produced because of the official act," and, as the Supreme Court has noted, "with knowledge that the donor was paying him compensation for an official act." In the Sun-Diamond case, though, there was one tiny problem: there was no evidence that the presents were given to Espy as compensation for any official act or that Espy did any favors in return. And so Smaltz offered a novel construction of the law. Under the statute, he argued, there did not in fact need to be anything like a quid pro quo—as long as there was the *potential* for one. In a single stroke, he uncoupled the quid from the quo. Remarkably, Judge Ricardo M. Urbina—the same judge presiding now in the Espy trial—agreed. "The crime does not require any exchange of promises between the public official and those alleged to have given him things of value," he instructed the jury. "It is sufficient if the motivating factor for the payment is just to keep the official happy or to create a better relationship in general with the official." In short, criminal intent is not necessary, for the gift is in itself criminal.

As he sits in his office, sipping coffee, Smaltz says that this is the only way to make the law viable—to ensure "that the regulated cannot buy their way into regulatory grace." And, to a certain extent, Smaltz is right: the detachment of the quid from the quo reflects the realities of influence peddling. These days, influence is rarely peddled in a direct exchange of a gift for a favor. Instead, the peddlers prefer to dispense gifts now in return for unspecified favors in the future. It seeks to make the favor-giver indebted to the gift-giver; this indebtedness takes time and is accomplished by a process that might be called strategic schmoozing. Or, in a word, cronyism. There is no doubt that Espy is a crony; the trouble is he is not precisely a criminal. And, in making all forms of croynism a crime, the Smaltz Standard allows none of the nuances of the older forms of political justice—the kind of justice that takes place outside the courtroom, the very kind that expelled Espy from Washington.

Under the Smaltz Standard, there was little question what would happen to Sun-Diamond: the jury convicted, and the court fined the company $1.5 million. The verdict, which now faces an appeal, received only passing mention in the press. But it is more important than any other corruption verdict in recent history, and it is the key to the Espy case. "We do not charge a quid pro quo," Smaltz boasted to reporters after indicting the former Agriculture secretary. "We don't have to under the gratuity statute. A quid pro quo is not required." After hearing Smaltz's astonishing claim, Washington's myriad ethics consultants understood what few others in the country had noticed. "This opens up the door," says Ruskin of the Congressional Accountability Project. During oral arguments on the Sun-Diamond appeal last month, at least one judge seemed to grasp just how much. While Smaltz's lead counsel, Ted Greenberg, was making his novel argument, Judge David Tatel suddenly interrupted him and asked incredulously:

> So if an old friend of mine from law school who's a partner in a firm and has a pending case before this court takes me to a baseball game, as we've done for years, that's an illegal gratuity?
> Mr. Greenberg: It may well be, yes.
> Judge Tatel: You're serious?
> Mr. Greenberg: If you have a case, if [Sun-Diamond's lawyer] takes you to the game tomorrow, takes you to the Redskins game on Sunday while you have this case pending before you, that's a gratuity.

If the judges agree with Smaltz and Greenberg—their ruling is expected early this year—then they are not the only ones suddenly vulnerable to prosecution: most politicians in Washington will become criminals overnight. The threshold for illegal gratuities will be reduced to a mere trifle: a cup of coffee or a slice of cheesecake. It is the latest and most dramatic chapter in the criminalization of politics, and it caps a two-decade-long effort by watchdog groups, prosecutors, and the press to push the law deeper into politics, where shame and the electoral process once sufficed.

As Suzanne Garment observes in *Scandal: The Culture of Mistrust in American Politics*, there has been an explosion of rules and regulations to purify politics since Watergate, most of them so arcane and bureaucratic that only the authors can understand them. The latest example is the gift-ban rule, which prohibits House members from accepting any presents; but, to cope with the unruliness of life, the rule comes with pages of exemptions, including exemptions to the exemptions: a congressman can literally eat finger food at a reception if it is on the end of a toothpick but not on a plate (the assumption being that the indulgence is incidental), or drink a beer while standing up and mingling but not while sitting down—unless pregnant or handicapped (again, the assumption being that the indulgence is impromptu).

Intended to remove even the whiff of wrongdoing, these rules have only created new opportunities for it. They have given prosecutors and ethics committees hun-

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dreds of new crimes to pursue. Which, in turn, has created a population explosion of prosecutors to pursue them. In a little more than three decades, according to Garment, the number of assistant U.S. attorneys has grown from 657 to roughly 3,000. The careers of prosecutors, like those of independent counsels, are now made by destroying those of public officials. In 1970, before Watergate, federal prosecutors indicted only 45 federal, state, and local officials. By 1980, the annual number had jumped to 442; by 1983, to over 1,000—more than 20 times the original rate. "It's insane," says Brand. "The whole political process will soon be criminalized."

Many corruption cases, of course, are sensible, indeed vital. Watergate and Abscam are the most obvious examples. But there are lesser-known cases, too: most recently, the ongoing investigation of former Detroit Congresswoman Barbara-Rose Collins for allegedly stealing funds from a scholarship program intended for needy inner-city kids. But the fact is that cases like these—in which grave malfeasance is investigated or proved—are rarities. As Peter W. Morgan and Glenn H. Reynolds note in their new book, *The Appearance of Impropriety: How the Ethics Wars Have Undermined American Government, Business, and Society*, most cases against public officials today focus on the appearance of crimes rather than actual crimes. In so doing, they invert the very notion upon which the Founders predicated American democracy: that we are not angels, and that mere laws cannot make us so. Whereas the Founders created a constitutional order designed to restrain our baser instincts—through elections, the press, and the separation of powers—the new, dehumanizing laws try to transform fallible lawmakers into perfectly infallible ones. And because this is all but impossible (what do you do if someone buys you a beer on your birthday?), it has instead transformed every politician into a potential criminal.

Ironically, the very victims of this system, the Espys of the world, are the ones who most exploit it. Though lawmakers may have once written these rules reluctantly to purge their sins, they now use them gleefully to purge one another. In 1989, Newt Gingrich manipulated the Ethics Committee to oust Democratic Speaker Jim Wright; five years later, when Gingrich became Speaker, Democrats filed more than 70 ethics complaints against him. In the Espy case, Republicans who once derided the independent prosecutor now embrace Smaltz as a conquering hero; Democrats, who cheered the independent counsel probes of the Reagan and Bush administrations, now deride Smaltz as a "rogue" and a "zealot." Last month, Democratic Congressman Tom Lantos, a Holocaust survivor, went so far as to compare Smaltz to the former U.N. Secretary-General and Nazi Kurt Waldheim. In 1987, Espy, then a Mississippi congressman, cheerfully voted for the reauthorization of the independent counsel statute. "It's like the old tribal tradition: if one of your guys is killed, then you have to kill another in order to let his soul go to heaven," explains Congressman Brian Bilbray, a Republican from California. "It would be more civilized to have the Ethics Committee just issue pistols and have them walk ten paces and turn and fire. God knows it would be a whole lot neater." Faster, too.

These days, even reporters have become complicitous in the process. Like those of prosecutors and politicians, the careers of many journalists depend on the myriad laws that police public officials. With more than 300,000 regulations on the books, any journalist today can "uncover," "expose," or "unearth" an ethics violation—a politician who ate sushi with a lobbyist or misfiled an FEC report. In the new ethical order, we are all Woodwards and Bernsteins. (And they are all Liddys and Haldemans.) Except that the new rules have removed the most judicious elements of journalism: shades of gray, nuances, distinctions. Expand the province of muck, and you will have more and more muckraking. At the same time, the new laws leave some of the most serious kinds of muck untouched. Not a single paper investigated Smaltz's $35,000 figure to see if it was accurate. "The independent counsel," explains Bob Woodward of *The Washington Post*, "can have an unhealthy effect on what reporters decide to scrutinize."

The consequence is more than imperial prosecutors and endless scandal; it is the gradual erosion of decency and democracy. Polls show that the majority of Americans believe Washington is more corrupt today than before the post-Watergate rules were passed. We have defined political deviancy down. By making everything a crime, we have, in effect, made nothing a crime; and we have certainly painted a picture of American politics that is guaranteed to produce a disaffected American citizenry.

In relinquishing our ethical judgments to judges and juries, moreover, we have done the one thing that we never intended: let the morally corrupt off the hook. The law, when not being used as a weapon, has become a shield for political miscreants. Former Attorney General Edwin Meese used a rare decision by an independent prosecutor not to indict to claim he was not guilty of any impropriety at all. When Vice President Al Gore was accused of making fundraising calls from the White House, he uttered his infamous line: there was "no controlling legal authority." It was the perfect mantra for this climate in which legalism does the work of moralism. And after Janet Reno decided not to appoint an independent prosecutor to investigate the case, a frustrated Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, cried out, this is not just "a narrow legal question.... It is a broad ethical question." Yet, like the press and Republicans, he then fell mute. By using the law to castigate politicians, we have surrendered our vocabulary of outrage, and confessed a lack of confidence in our prerogatives as citizens to register our displeasure at the polls. As a result, even before Donald Smaltz rode into town on his Harley, the fate of Alphonso Michael Espy had been reduced to two preposterous extremes: he will spend his middle age in prison, or, worse, he will be acquitted by a jury of his peers and claim that he never did anything wrong in the first place. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Vengeance and Vexation

Political satire makes us feel good. Ever since it began in dramatized form—2,400 years ago with Aristophanes—it has been a means by which an audience of the powerless could enjoy criticism of the powerful. Curiously, however, in modern times the critical function has been at least matched by another function which had always lurked below and has now grown: vengeance.

The arrival of mass media brought with it a paradox. The constant drizzle of governmental propaganda on us swelled through this century to a flood, but the more invasive the means of communication became, the less we in the public felt that we communicated—with those who govern our lives. Occasional attempts are made to close this gap, or to seem so: Jimmy Carter's phone-ins at the White House, Clinton's "town meetings." Still, the most telling effect that the public has on governmental behavior these days is not through elections, which at every level have become slugging matches between rival campaign funds, but through popularity polls, as crude a means of political criticism as could be imagined. (Personal behavior of presidents, for instance, affects polls no less than grave policy decisions.)

The only gratifying revenge we can have on the powerful, not only for their actions but for *being* powerful, is through satire. It has not resulted in much change in America, and now it may result in even less, but, oh, does it make us feel better. Will **Wag the Dog** (New Line) deter another Panama or Grenada adventure? We can doubt it. But at least the film demonstrates, with wit, that we are not unwitting. Our laughter at the film is our moment of absolute equality with our governors.

The screenplay is by Hilary Henkin and David Mamet. (*Variety* reports that Barry Levinson, the director of the picture, is unhappy with the Writers' Guild decision about those credits: Levinson thinks that Mamet should have had first or sole credit). It's adapted from a novel by Larry Beinhart, but the dialogue stings like Mamet. The film's style is, inevitably, cartoon: characteristics of familiar public figures are exaggerated, as are familiar political ploys. And, almost consistently, it sizzles.

The president, never named or shown, is running for re-election. Eleven days before Election Day, he is charged with sexually molesting a Girl Scout who was on a visit to the Oval Office. A White House staffer, played by Anne Heche, turns for help to an experienced spin doctor, Robert De Niro. The spinmeister quickly resolves that only a war can save the president: a war will distract attention from the sex story and unite the country behind the president. The war, De Niro decides, should be with Albania. He then flies to the coast to engage a Hollywood biggie, Dustin Hoffman, to "produce" the war.

The plot snowballs quickly, getting so large as it rolls that it's harder to control. The brisk dialogue whips it along, but eventually the story bulges through its own conventions. A Hollywood model is hired to enact a horror scene from Albania for a phony TV news clip. Can we believe that no one would recognize her? Absolute secrecy about the war scheme is enforced under pain of death, yet a lot of people along the way unavoidably learn that it's just a scheme—plane pilots, a filling-station operator, and others. How are the schemers assured that beans will not be spilled?

Nonetheless, the film provides a two-hour high, a pleasant delusion of standing toe-to-toe with those who stand above us. (It's notable that political satire is becoming a Hollywood staple. Among other relatively recent examples, *Bob Roberts*. Forthcoming are two satires starring Warren Beatty and John Travolta.) The lift of the picture comes, after the screenplay, from Barry Levinson's bustling direction and from the editing of Stu Linder. Many of the jokes depend on timing, not by the actors but by cutting from one face to another and back again, all done deftly. Levinson has wound up his two principal actors and set them off. De Niro hits the ground running (a relief from his lethargic role in *Jackie Brown*) and slices through the picture like Machiavelli gone electronic. Hoffman gives us an ego almost extracted from the body like a live, wriggling nerve. His gift for comedy was evident 30 years ago in a play called *Eh?*; that gift has lain dormant for long stretches in his career, but here it sparkles. Anne Heche does competently what is asked of her.

At one point Heche says that television has destroyed the electoral process.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Amistad. *A slave revolt in 1839 is graphically recreated by Steven Spielberg and an excellent cast, along with the resulting trial. The cinematic texture more than compensates for some compressions in the story. (Reviewed 12/22/97)* **Ma Vie en Rose.** *From Belgium, a delicate account of a small boy who wants to be a girl. The ending cops out, but the situation is perceptively treated. (1/26/98)* **The Sweet Hereafter.** *A snowbound town is desolated by a school bus accident. A lawyer attempting to help the sufferers uncovers human depths. Reticent and poignant. (12/8/97)* **The Winter Guest.** *A daughter and her visiting mother, played by Emma Thompson and her mother, Phyllida Law, after the daughter's husband dies. The encounter lacks conclusion, but the journey, under Alan Rickman's direction, is exquisite. (1/5/98)*—**SK**

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Oversimple, yes, but not false. In a way, a weird way, it would be reassuring to hear a real White House staffer make that comment some day.

Jack Nicholson, one of the best actors in American screen history, is miscast again. It has happened before—*Carnal Knowledge*, *The Border*, *Reds*—and it happens once more in **As Good As It Gets** (TriStar). Here he plays a nasty, neurotic author of popular novels, successful, who lives alone and likes it, who strenuously objects to his neighbors in his luxe Manhattan apartment house, and who likes to vex them with his unpleasantness.

In this film directed and co-written by James L. Brooks, who did the much more accomplished *Terms of Endearment* and *Broadcast News*, Nicholson gets involved in controversy with a gay neighbor (Greg Kinnear) who tolerates his offenses unbelievably; and he also gets involved with a waitress (Helen Hunt) in the coffee shop where he breakfasts. This tangle, too, is unbelievable, partly because of the soppiness that eventually comes Nicholson's way.

He is quite visibly uncomfortable in his role. It needed an actor who could easily be viciously stuffy, like William Hurt. Nicholson struggles for the core of the man but never gets it; so, in most scenes, he resorts to working his face, with grimaces and sneering smiles and lip-pursings in place of acting.

The screenplay has diverting moments, and Hunt's performance rings true, truer than the role itself. Why is this exceptional woman working as a waitress? Exceptional women do such work, of course, but their choices are usually explicable. Hunt's character is never clarified. She's just a plot mechanism put in place, with Hunt trying to give her life.

Coincidence. Two weeks ago, apropos of *Arguing the World*, I lamented the fact that the quality of Irving Howe's prose has been insufficiently recognized. Just as this was published, the January *Atlantic Monthly* appeared, containing Nathan Glick's excellent article on Howe, in which his prose and other strengths are celebrated justly. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Lion Queen

Julie Taymor is the new lion queen of Broadway, universally acclaimed for having built a bridge between the avant-garde and the commercial theater. Past experience reminds us that such a construction is less like a bridge than a conduit, since the traffic usually flows in one direction. (Typical is the fate of the experimental theater director Tom O'Horgan, who seems to have lost his way entirely after the Broadway success of *Hair*.) Still, there is no question that *The Lion King*, now playing at the exquisitely refurbished New Amsterdam Theater, is a brilliant amalgam of art and business. The Disney group has grasped something that still eludes most Broadway producers: it is the embrace of risk, not the repetition of tired formulas, that leads to a prestigious box-office success. *The Lion King*, being one long *coup de théâtre*, is almost entirely a triumph of spectacle. In this, it resembles most Broadway musicals. But for once the spectacle proceeds from a fresh imagination rather than a cynical contrivance. A single Taymor puppet leaves an infinitely more indelible imprint on the imagination than the whole kaboodle of ascending saucers, descending helicopters, collapsing chandeliers, and similar contraptions.

Perhaps Taymor's greatest achievement is to have proved that the Broadway audience is not a predictable population. *The Lion King* is a tourist attraction all right, but it is also a source of squealing wonder for thousands of kids who have hitherto sought their thrills in television cartoons, action figures, and computer games. Just to be present during the first stunning moments of the evening, when a silken sun rises and a whole menagerie of giraffes, cheetahs, gazelles, rhinos, and elephants begins to wend its way through the audience to the accompaniment of pulsing African music, is to watch the instant transformation of children from drugged spectators into wide-eyed participants in a live theater event. One's attention is equally divided between observing the spectacle on stage and watching the kids jumping out of their seats.

I can't compare the show to its source material, since I haven't seen the Disney cartoon. Some things are beyond a

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reviewer's bounden duty. Still, even in its theatrical and (presumably) more sophisticated incarnation, the plot of *The Lion King* is hardly a triumph of fairytale lore. Admittedly, the book by Roger Allers and Irene Mecchi does try to capture some of the dream-like psychology of a Grimm story. It is based on family conflicts, particularly the tensions between fathers and sons. Each time it threatens to plunge into any dark areas, however, the plot jerks us back into conventional sentiment. Students of Bettelheim, be warned: there is little here to excite the mind.

Briefly: Mufasa, the king of the lions, warns his son Simba not to venture too far from the pride. The cub disobeys and, through the connivance of Scar, Mufasa's villainous brother, comes to believe that he is responsible for his father's death, when Mufasa, trying to rescue Simba from stampeding wildebeestes, succumbs to their thundering hooves. Later Simba returns from a long exile, overcomes his guilt, kills the usurping Scar, and assumes the throne, with his new bride Nala, as the successor lion king.

Taymor uses this limp story as a line on which to hang an array of spellbinding visuals. Her previous work displayed the fruits of her investigations into Indonesian and Balinese dance, Japanese Bunraku puppetry, and Javanese shadow play. In *The Lion King*, she has also drawn on the energies of Zulu warrior dances, choreographed by Garth Fagan, and the pulse of African music, some traditional, some invented by Lebo M., to enhance the original Elton John/Tim Rice score. For most of its length, *The Lion King* looks less like a Disney cartoon than a South African musical such as *Woja Afrika* or *Ipi Ntombi*. As if this were not enough of a stylistic mix, she throws in some amusing comic riffs derived from American vaudeville and movies. The result is an arresting multicultural unity—and if you think this is an oxymoron, go see the show.

Miraculously, Taymor's work shows little sign of Disney's patented anthropomorphic cuteness. Instead of investing animals with the character of humans, *The Lion King* shows us humans controlling the behavior of animals, thus managing to skirt all the cloying pitfalls of the Disney menagerie. This is accomplished, Asian-style, by exposing the source of the puppetry, masks, and shadow play. The giraffes are actors on stilts using poles to maneuver their front legs. The faces of other actors appear through the jaws of grinning hyenas. The actor playing Zazu, the comic parrot who acts as the king's adviser, wears a clown costume (including a bowler hat) while carrying the bird in front of him like a breast plate. The actors playing the lions wear masks on top of their heads. The vaudeville team of the warthog and the meercat are visibly manipulated by their handlers. Wild birds fly through the air connected to poles held by puppeteers. Swaying grass fields in the veldt prove to be a chorus of African women. The stampeding beasts are represented by a series of painted drops that loom larger and larger as they thunder toward the forestage. Scar falls to his death, in slow motion, visibly suspended by wires. And so on: there are hundreds of such inventions during the course of the show.

The effect of this technique is not to violate our suspension of disbelief but to reinforce it. What every theatrical tradition in the world has long understood—Western realism being the lone exception—is that the secret of stage magic lies not in trying to hypnotize the audience into an illusion of reality, but in continually reminding the audience that it is sitting in a theater. This understanding has been slow in coming to Method-dominated America, though it occurred to Yeats after discovering Arthur Waley's translation of Japanese Noh dramas, to O'Neill after experiencing Greek tragedy, to Pirandello after reading Bergson and absorbing *commedia dell'arte*, and to Brecht after studying Chinese and Elizabethan theater. The single American form that has continued (almost unwittingly) to challenge representational realism has been the musical, with its direct address to the audience, its changing scenic metaphors, its natural inclination to move abruptly from speech into song.

One of *The Lion King*'s many contributions to commercial theater practice has been Taymor's capacity to forge a more obvious link between American musicals and the non-illusionistic Asian conventions. Previously, she has applied her voluminous theater research to Italian comedy of the eighteenth century (Carlo Gozzi's *The King Stag* and *The Green Bird*), to Elizabethan drama (*The Tempest* and *Titus Andronicus*), and to South American fables (Horacio Quiroga's *Juan Darien*). Aside from a still-embryonic musical about the American revolution called *Liberties Taken*, this is the first time that Taymor has applied her techniques to a native form.

Has Taymor created a genuine work of art? Partially. There is no question about the brilliance of the first act, an absolutely ravishing series of scenic wonders. But in the second part, when the appealing ragamuffin who plays the young Simba (Scott Irby-Ranniar) transforms into a more conventionally acted adolescent (Jason Raize), the visuals are not quite sufficient to disguise the banality of the story. And it is in the second part of the show that you begin to question a few of the stylistic choices. Max Casella and Tom Alan Robbins as Timon the meercat and Pumbaa the warthog make such an amusing vaudeville duo that one is willing to forgive some of their more outrageous exchanges (Pumbaa to Simba: "Hey kid, what's eatin' ya?" Timon to Pumbaa: "Nothing, he's at the top of the food chain"). But there is an excess of low punning in the show, particularly among Scar's retinue of snarling hyenas, the most Disneyfied of Taymor's creations. (Scar: "I am plagued by a profound emptiness." Hyena: "You're a regular Ennui the Eighth." Scar: "I need to be bucked up." Hyena: "You already bucked up royally.")

The villainous Scar is played by the gifted John Vickery as a jaded and effeminate English aristocrat, in striking cultural contrast to his brother Mufasa (Samuel E. Wright), who is conceived as a noble warrior chieftain. This choice may have been influenced by the fact that Jeremy Irons provided the voice of Scar in the movie, but it makes a strongly anti-Western, if not vaguely homophobic, statement. Similarly, Scar's trio of evil hyenas talk in the tone and the idiom of inner-city street blacks, while the members of the pride have a stately tribal bearing. So does Tsidii Le Loka as Rafiki, the female baboon/witch-doctor, a character who frames the story with shamanistic dignity. Make of this what you will.

In short, no matter how manifold or perfectly realized the splendors of Taymor's achievement, they cannot conquer the material. Listing the elements of drama in descending order of importance, Aristotle puts spectacle last, "of all the parts ... the least artistic and least connected with the art of poetry." It is true that Julie Taymor, along with her splendid set designer (Richard Hudson) and lighting designer (Donald Holder), comes pretty close to making us revise the philosopher's estimate and move the element of spectacle further up the ladder. It is also true that spectacle is not Taymor's only contribution to *The Lion King*. She has also powerfully reinforced the characters and provided a splendid mise-en-scène. But how I hope that her next project will allow Taymor to display some of the more important Aristotelian virtues: strong action, powerful theme, compelling language, and dramatis personae that evoke the deeper motions of the heart. That's a good way to demonstrate that the traffic on the bridge between the avant-garde and the commercial theater flows both ways. •

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Providence at Bat

By Jackson Lears

Jackie Robinson: A Biography by Arnold Rampersad

(Knopf, 512 pp., $27.50)

No wonder Jackie Robinson is so appealing. The first black man to play major league baseball reminds Americans of the epic period in the quest for racial justice. It was a time of heroes and martyrs: Robinson and King, Rosa Parks and Medgar Evers. It was also a time of villains: Orval Faubus, Bull Connor, Lester Maddox, Byron de la Beckwith—buffoonish at best, homicidal at worst. The clarity of it all is irresistible. On the one side, universalist humanism, the vision of life embodied in *The Family of Man*, a crusade for simple justice led by noble black folks and their white, Northern, liberal allies; on the other side, a mob of rednecks, a repellent symbolic Other for a virtuous nation to define itself against as it took up the unfinished business of reconstructing a backward South. Racism was a pustulating boil in our lower regions, to be lanced through moral inspiration and pragmatic legislation. It was all so unambiguous, wasn't it?

This was an illusion, of course, as Jackie Robinson knew—a lurid journalistic fiction obscuring the myriad forms of race discrimination that flourished outside the South. By the late 1960s, it was no longer possible to deny that racism was a national phenomenon, as vicious in Chicago as in Birmingham. Racial issues would no longer seem so sharply defined. Civil rights lawyers began to devise complicated legislation designed to overturn the diffuse *de facto* segregation that pervaded American society. They did not always think through the impact of policies such as busing and affirmative action, especially the implications for working-class whites. Simple justice would never look so simple again.

Self-righteousness toward the South subsided; and the redneck Other was no longer such an easy target. White guilt about racism could no longer be so casually projected onto a particular section of the country or a particular social type. If it survived it was directed inward, toward the soul of white America, creating a murky notion of collective self-blame. This psychic strategy may have led to a fairer regional apportionment of moral responsibility, but it lacked any clear implications for political or even cultural debate. And so we are left with a "national conversation" about race that is a muddle of therapeutic clichés: a sign of our current confusion. Contrast this with an era when a single man could carry the message of an entire people: *This is my country, too.*

Yet Robinson was more than the point man in the struggle for black equality. He was also a Brooklyn Dodger, a member of the most sentimentalized team in the most sentimentalized era in American sports. And this, too, is part of his preternatural appeal. By the late 1940s, baseball owners and publicists had succeeded in identifying their business as The National Game, the emblem of a democratic and pluralistic American Way of Life. Present-day baseball writers have continued to embrace this mythology, and also to assume that the mid-century decades marked its crowning moment. Despite all the evidence to the contrary—serfdom and low salaries for the players; small crowds; a narrow geographic range confined to the Northeast and the Midwest; the boring predictability of New York dominance—the conventional wisdom maintains that the postwar epoch was a Golden Age of Baseball. It is almost impossible to envision the period except as a grainy montage of Movietone newsreels and Frank Capra film clips. Combine this nostalgia with the common American tendency to load ethical burdens onto athletes' backs, and it is easy to see why our jeremiahs make effective use of Jackie Robinson as a benchmark for measuring our moral decline. I don't doubt that they are onto something: Dennis Rodman and Latrell Sprewell are *not* inspiring figures. But neither were most of Robinson's contemporaries.

The hardest and most important task for a biographer of Robinson is to set aside his ideological utility as an icon of civil rights and a paragon of baseball, and to bring forward the man himself. This Arnold Rampersad has accomplished. A bland, "authorized" quality sometimes creeps into Rampersad's descriptions of Robinson ("As always, however, he looked with hope toward the future. . . ."), but in the end Rampersad shows that the man is more interesting than the monument. It cannot have been easy. Literary tradition holds (with some justification) that goodness rarely makes for interesting reading. And Robinson was nothing if not a good man. He pronounced civics-book maxims with utter sincerity; and he embodied them with dignity and grace under extraordinarily trying circumstances. On the baseball field, he hit for power as well as average, he covered vast stretches of the infield with astonishing agility, he ran the bases like a demon, and he offered a convincing model of unselfish team play. In the political arena, he struggled to keep the dream of racial integration alive despite an increasingly hostile political climate and the internecine rancors of the civil rights movement.

In a ballplayers' world of philandering drunks, Robinson epitomized the clean-cut morality of boys' sports books. He could have stepped out of a John R. Tunis novel. A devout Christian, he was passionately committed to his wife Rachel, a beautiful and accomplished woman who was equally devoted to him. He never drank alcohol until he was 52 years old, and then on a doctor's advice. He only rarely succumbed (judging by Rampersad's evidence) to the moral failings that the flesh is heir to. His most troublesome vice was a weakness for ice cream, pies, and cake. Despite lapses of tact or judgment, despite run-ins with umpires, sportswriters, and professional bigots, he never provoked lasting enmity. Indeed, Robinson inspired profound admiration on both sides of the color line. What's a biographer to do with such a man?

One possibility is the epic mode. Connect Robinson's story with the broad movements of African American history in the twentieth century, and the tale acquires the resonance of myth. The hero, still a baby, is carried by train westward, part of the great black migration from rural Georgia to southern California; he encounters a wider world on the (mostly white) playgrounds of Pasadena, and in the army during World War II; he meets Branch Rickey, president and general manager of the Dodgers, himself an American original, a Missouri Methodist with a social conscience. Rickey is Virgil to Robinson's Dante. With his sage counsel, the hero embarks on his lonely quest. He endures innumerable trials. Eventually he triumphs, earns the praise and the respect of those who had once distrusted or despised him, then descends

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into the maelstrom of civil rights politics, from Selma and Greensboro to Watts, Newark, and Detroit. All the while his body is deteriorating from diabetes and heart disease. And when he finally departs the stage, his cortège is thronged by mourners. *Exeunt omnes.*

But Rampersad is scrupulous, and he prefers to complicate this picture. One of the strengths of his book is that he remains dry-eyed, avoiding any tendency to sentimentalize postwar baseball, the early civil rights movement, or even (with some exceptions) Robinson himself. Still, amid the batting averages and the fielding percentages, the testimonial dinners, the awards and the honors, the political maneuverings, there emerges a moving account of a gifted athlete's rise and fall: a man incandescent in youth, gray, lame, and nearly blind in middle age, done in at 53 by the premature decline of the body that made his career—a man whose physical disintegration might well have been related to the rage that he courageously suppressed for so long. Rampersad's calm accretion of details dissipates some of the hagiographic haze surrounding Robinson. It restores some of the complexity to an oversimplified era, and leaves Robinson a hero after all. But not an epic hero. A tragic one.

Robinson was born in 1919, the youngest of five children in a sharecropping family in rural south Georgia. His mother, Mallie McGriff Robinson, was a woman of energy and determination who for a while was able to make even peonage pay; his father, Jerry Robinson, was a ladies' man who left home for good soon after Jack was born. Without a father on the premises, the Robinsons were increasingly vulnerable to the whims of their white landlord, who thought Mallie was "about the sassiest nigger woman ever on this place." Her prospects were dimming; the Ku Klux Klan was on the rise in the neighborhood. So Mallie was ready to pay attention when her half-brother, well-tailored and apparently prosperous, returned from the West Coast promoting the promised land. "If you want to get closer to heaven," he said, "visit California." Mallie was persuaded. She packed her children and her possessions in a buggy, headed for Cairo, Georgia, and took the train west. There were seven other family members with her, including her sister, her brother-in-law, and their children. Jackie Robinson, little more than a year old, was already swept up in the tide of a mass movement.

After Mallie found steady work as a maid, she and her brother-in-law bought a modest white frame house on Pepper

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Street, in a working-class neighborhood of Pasadena. They called the place "The Castle," partly because it seemed like a refuge from a town where old people scurried in fear from black faces and where once, Rampersad reports, "someone burned a cross on the front lawn." Pasadena's affluent white majority was determined to keep property values high and colored people in their place. Still, the Robinsons gradually won the respect of their neighbors and made a decent life for themselves.

Despite a growing maze of Jim Crow restrictions, there were plenty of places for black kids to play in northwest Pasadena, and young Jack Robinson made the most of them. He held his own in the nearly all-white public schools, where a guidance counselor listed his probable future employment as "gardener." But his real home was on the playground. As his sister recalled, "ever since I can remember, he always had a ball in his hand." Marbles, soccer, dodgeball, tennis, golf, football, baseball: he was determined to excel at whatever he tried. "At that time," according to a childhood friend, "Jackie wasn't a very likable person, because his whole thing was just win, win, win, and beat everybody."

Without setting out to do so, Robinson was already testing the meritocratic mythology of sports. Could "amazing drive," combined with "speed and guile and a fierce will to win," carry an athlete past the color line? Apparently so, in Southern California in the 1930s. At Pasadena Junior College and later at UCLA, Robinson soared. In football, he was a brilliant broken-field runner; in basketball, he was a pioneer point guard who introduced the fast-break to a deliberate white boys' game; in baseball, he was a bandit on the bases who sometimes stole second, third, and home in succession; in track, he was the second-best broad jumper on the PJC team, behind his brother Mack. (Rampersad claims unconvincingly that Jack felt no rivalry with Mack.) By the late 1930s, Robinson had a regional reputation as a superstar.

He also had a reputation as a mad brawler, always ready to smash in the teeth of any white man who insulted him. Rampersad struggles with some success to modulate "the myth of an anti-social, violent Jackie Robinson," but he does not try to hide Robinson's rage, or the white animosity that ignited it. Robinson's anger was a wholly understandable response to a relentless round of provocations: waitresses refusing him service; sports opponents targeting him for special fouls and abuse; bullying cops demanding deference on the street. He came to hate Pasadena. "I've always felt like an intruder, even in school," he later said. "People in Pasadena were less understanding, in some ways, than Southerners. And they were more openly hostile."

Robinson's greatest resentment may have stemmed from the realization that, despite his extraordinary talents, his career opportunities were stunted from the outset. In 1938, the Chicago White Sox, in Pasadena for spring training, played a local youth team that included Robinson, who competed with his customary ferocity. "Geez, if that kid was white I'd sign him right now," remarked the White Sox manager. Robinson was 19, a contemporary of Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio and as talented an athlete, but with no professional possibilities in view. Meanwhile there were more pressing problems, some of them posed by the Pasadena police. When Robinson stood up to them, refusing to disappear during racially charged confrontations, he risked a night in jail. (This happened on at least two occasions.) He was acquiring a reputation as "a sort of thug" among the UCLA faithful, despite their enthusiasm for his all-American accomplishments on the football field.

But Robinson was also beginning to glimpse the forces that would steady some of his rage. One was the socially-charged Methodism preached by the Reverend Karl Everette Downs, a black minister who demonstrated to Robinson that Christianity did not have to be a synonym for submission. The other was Rachel Isum, a nursing student at UCLA who epitomized propriety but remained beguiling. She and Jack began a long courtship, made longer by their mutual shyness. They flirted in the school parking lot, while she sat behind the wheel of her weathered Ford V-8; they danced in the dark at the Biltmore. When they finally married, she would provide the single most enduring source of emotional support for a lonely man who "felt like an intruder" for much of his life.

But first they had to get through the war. A second lieutenant attached to a segregated tank battalion at Camp Hood, Texas, Robinson found himself court-martialed when he refused to move to the back of an Army bus after the driver ordered him to do so. He protested when the MPs were called, especially (he claimed) when one of them, a private, called him a nigger. The commandant of MPs brought ridiculously trumped-up charges of insubordination; Robinson was acquitted, but he was embittered.

After the war, Robinson's athletic career reopened quickly. He endured a brief stint with the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro Leagues. That meant long bus rides, squalid hotels, poor umpiring and unreliable scorekeeping, gifted ballplayers pickling their talents in alcohol. Through all the frustrations, his Christianity sustained him. By this time he had developed a firm belief in providence, a conviction (as Rampersad writes) that "God was behind his life, guiding it, and intending him for some important purpose."

Toward the end of the 1945 season, Branch Rickey clarified that purpose when he summoned the mystified Robinson to Brooklyn. Rickey was a Bible-reading moralist whom some people found insufferable. His sonorous sermons were legendary; his office was known to reporters as "the Cave of Winds." Yet he was also a product of an important ethical tradition that once lay at the heart of American political culture, a tradition that now has been rendered virtually invisible: an egalitarian, tolerant strain of evangelical Christianity. This outlook pervaded the rural Northeast and Midwest. It was compatible with the Republican party when the party was still "the party of Lincoln." (Rickey kept a portrait of Lincoln in his office.) Liberal evangelicalism was individualist and anti-Communist; it embodied the Main Street values of the petit bourgeoisie. But it also fostered a universalist vision of equal opportunity.

Present-day intellectuals are willing to grant some dignity to black evangelicalism, but they are less magnanimous when it comes to white evangelicalism. Branch Rickey should remind us that certain home-grown versions of Protestant Christianity, however alien they may be to skeptical modern sensibilities, possess a profound moral power as well. The belief that one is part of a providential order paradoxically gives strength to individual will and choice. It was liberal evangelicalism, certainly, that formed the deepest part of the complex bond between Robinson and Rickey.

The scene in Rickey's office has entered baseball mythology. "I'm looking for a ballplayer with guts enough not to fight back," Rickey told Robinson. Rickey was not nicknamed "the Mahatma" for nothing; he evoked the blend of Gandhian non-violence and Christian nonresistance that, within a decade, would energize King's leadership. He quoted Jesus: "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Rickey may have been an old windbag, but he was hitting Robinson in the heart, invoking the Methodist Christianity that they shared. Both men believed that

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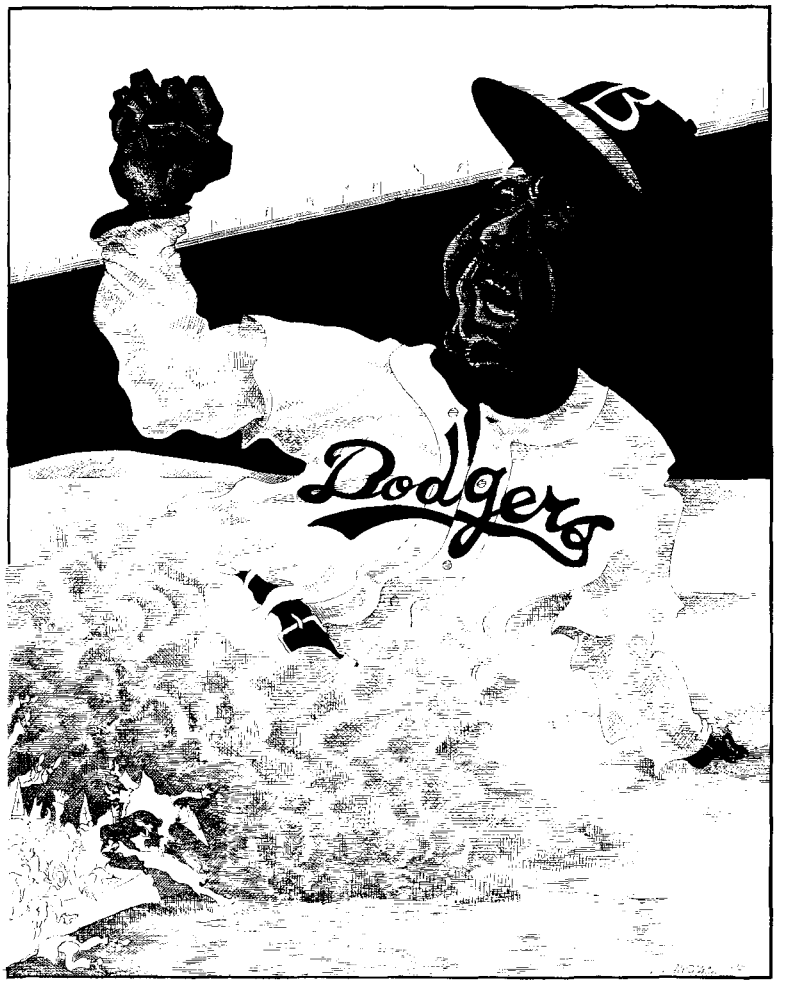
Robinson was part of a divine plan. And a mission foreordained in heaven can inspire exceptional efforts. There is no room in such a worldview for chance: only for faith and will. "Luck is the residue of design," Rickey liked to say. People who think that they are instruments of God's purpose can be dangerous monomaniacs, but not always. Sometimes their conviction sustains their capacity to resist injustice. And so it was with Robinson. His faith in a providential order combined with a sense of personal responsibility soon became a characteristic feature of the early civil rights movement.

Rickey's plan called for Robinson to play for a year with the Montreal Royals of the International League, and then to move up to the Dodgers if the experiment seemed to be succeeding. It did, from day one. Robinson performed brilliantly, leading the Royals to the League championship and silently tolerating torrents of abuse. Montreal fans and black fans everywhere loved him; white fans in rival cities reviled him as a "nigger son of a bitch." Hostility concentrated his energies. When a player in the Syracuse dugout threw a black cat onto the field as Robinson waited to bat, taunting "Hey Jackie, there's your cousin," Robinson doubled and scored.

One can only imagine the tension that Robinson felt in towns where race-baiting was a way of life, such as Baltimore, when 10,000 black fans and 15,000 white fans jammed into a rickety old ballpark to watch Robinson play. Despite his focus on the field, Robinson could not eat or sleep. Rachel was pregnant, experiencing inexplicable fevers but keeping her worries to herself "because," she said, "I had begun to think that I was married to a man with a destiny, someone who had been chosen for a great task, and I couldn't let him down." Even the comparatively skeptical Rachel had begun to accept the notion of Jack's providential mission.

Robinson rode the momentum of his Montreal season into his first year with the Dodgers, surviving an abortive rebellion by some of his teammates, enduring more sneers and insults (and beanballs from opposing pitchers), gradually winning respect from players and adulation from fans, including white ones. Still, even friendly gestures could cause excruciating strain. During one of the regular bridge games on the train, Rampersad reports, his teammate Hugh Casey casually told Robinson "his secret for changing his luck at cards down home in Georgia: 'I used to go out and find me the biggest, blackest nigger woman I could find and rub her teats to change my luck.'" Then he rubbed Robinson's hair. Casey was a veteran who had taken an avuncular interest in Robinson; he meant to show that Robinson belonged. But Robinson's silence bespoke his pain and fury. It was about this time that the sportswriter Jimmy Cannon described Robinson as "the loneliest man I have ever seen in sports."



JACKIE ROBINSON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Success on the field brought improvements in everyday life. Robinson's rookie season was a triumph. He and Rachel made some white friends, Jewish neighbors in Flatbush. (This was the ancient era when common experiences of exclusion and common commitments to tolerance brought blacks and Jews together.) More black players began to join the Dodgers, led by the catcher Roy Campanella and the pitcher Don Newcombe. Robinson's life settled into a predictable rhythm: summer on the baseball field; barnstorming tours in the fall for extra cash; winter on the rubber-chicken circuit—an endless round of speaking engagements, awards, and dinners.

In many ways, Robinson remained a prickly loner. After his rookie season, he was freer to let his anger fly. The longer he played, the more likely he was to rage openly at umpires or at opposing players, particularly if he had reason to suspect them of racial slurs. He tossed bats, kicked gloves, and on one occasion he threw a ball at Milwaukee pitcher Lew Burdette, missing his head by inches. "I wanted to hit him right between the eyes," Robinson said. His anger contrasted with the calm of Campanella, who played Sancho Panza to Robinson's Quixote. Campanella was the trickster, Robinson the questing idealist, annoyed by Campanella's apparently easy acceptance of Jim Crow conditions.

Most of the time, though, Robinson's religious commitments kept his anger in check. Every night, on his knees, he prayed—for strength, for self-control, who knows? His sincerity and his decency sanitized his language. "I was sorry to see Eddie go.... He was a great guy and a swell ballplayer," Robinson said when the Dodgers traded second baseman Eddie Stanky, even though the move allowed Robinson to play a position he coveted. After the Dodgers had a mediocre year in 1948, Robinson said, "I made myself a solemn vow to redeem myself and the Dodgers in 1949." The Dodgers made it to the Series that year, but, as Robinson acknowledged to reporters, the Yankees "kicked heck out of us."

During these years, he began addressing banquet audiences about "my pet peeve, juvenile delinquency." This was before many Americans had adopted irony as a way of life. In-your-face attitudes were not yet *de rigeur* for aspiring free spirits. And lots of thoughtful people spoke as earnestly as Robinson. More

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than most, he meant what he said. Jackie Robinson really *was* a character from a boys' book—or at least he behaved like one much of the time.

"I couldn't believe that the man could be so naïve. He trusted everybody!" said Martin Stone, an attorney who became Robinson's financial adviser. In 1950, when Robinson starred in a movie called *The Jackie Robinson Story*, he was the opposite of a prima donna on the set; his only demand was that the cast include his UCLA friend Kenny Washington. When the filming was over he thanked everyone involved, including an assistant electrician atop a catwalk. Among all the Dodgers, only Robinson consoled the heartbroken pitcher Ralph Branca after he gave up the home run that lost the 1951 pennant playoff to the New York Giants. Robinson befriended eight-year-old boys, visited sick children in hospitals, worked with the YMCA and promoted dozens of charitable causes. He was generous, kind, and courteous—a working-class hero.

When working-class heroes succeed in America, they move to the suburbs. By February 1955, the Robinsons and their three children were installed in a house in Stamford, Connecticut. The Robinsons had a big mortgage on a big house, still under construction and already well over budget; they attended the white Congregational Church because Rachel "didn't like being preached at" in the local black church; and their neighbors were almost all white. And Jack took up golf, which became his "grand passion." If the Robinsons in Connecticut could be viewed as harbingers of black *embourgeoisement*, there were changes in the borough of Brooklyn that also revealed the shape of things to come, including the departure of the Dodgers. By 1956, Rampersad writes, "the repopulation of the borough by new immigrant communities was changing the peculiar culture that had long nourished the team." Walter O'Malley had already formulated his diabolical plan to bring the beloved bums to Los Angeles.

Robinson, meanwhile, was ready to pack up his gear. He was keen to go beyond sports and enter the wider world of business and politics. Achievements in those other realms would not be as clear-cut as batting .300 or winning the Most Valuable Player award; but he hoped that they might be even more significant. He wanted to succeed in business, to discredit racial stereotypes about shiftless blacks and to pay down his mounting debt. William H. Black, a self-made man who owned the Chock Full o' Nuts coffee company, offered Robinson a job as vice-president in charge of personnel relations. Black was a humane welfare capitalist, but he didn't much care for unions. Among other things, he wanted Robinson to be a buffer between union organizers and his (largely black) workforce. What Robinson thought about these plans is unclear; what is clear is that unions did not fit neatly into his liberal-evangelical worldview. He believed in the possibilities of entrepreneurial individualism. He took the job.

Robinson also wanted to play a more than ceremonial role in the civil rights movement. It was the hour of integration's apogee. Robinson's rebuke to a New Orleans sportswriter could stand as a summary of the principles of the struggle: "We ask for nothing special. We ask only to be permitted to live as you live, and as our nation's Constitution provides." One could hardly pose simpler or more justifiable demands.

Within a short time after Robinson's retirement from baseball in 1956, however, the clarity of the ballfield and the early civil rights movement yielded to frustrating confusion in business and politics. By the time he died in 1972, his fate resembled that of most professional athletes; he seemed superseded by cultural fashion and ravaged by the passage of time. True to his individualist outlook, he wanted entrepreneurial success as well as salaried security; but nearly all his business ventures, from clothing stores to construction and real estate companies, ended in a muddle. His efforts were undone by the poor management practices of men whom he had naïvely trusted, by the racist lending policies of banks, and by the absence of investors and spending power in the neighborhoods that he aimed to revitalize.

It was hard to create black capitalism without black capital. A work ethic alone was not enough. And politics proved equally problematic. The Republican Party attracted him; like other liberal evangelicals, he kindled to its reputation for moral probity, its freedom from Southern bigots and urban machines, as well as its enthusiasm for business and its toughness on communism. He was "completely dazzled" when he met Richard Nixon, and he remained sufficiently impressed by him to work for his presidential campaign in 1960. This was partly out of distaste for John Kennedy, who had tried to block the civil rights bill in 1957 and invited Orval Faubus to sit with him on the platform at the Democratic convention. Kennedy, in Robinson's view, was "first and foremost a cold, calculating political machine." Robert Kennedy retaliated by denouncing Robinson as an anti-labor stooge at Chock Full o' Nuts.

But in October 1960, when Martin Luther King was sentenced to four months at hard labor after a Georgia sit-in, the contrast between Republican piety and Democratic corruption became less clear. Robinson pleaded with Nixon to show some support for King; Nixon mumbled about "grandstanding," temporized, and finally refused. Meanwhile Kennedy made a much-publicized telephone call to Coretta Scott King—a canny move, but a risk for any candidate dependent on white Southern votes. (And an indication, perhaps, that Robert Kennedy's commitment to the civil rights movement was beginning to influence his brother.) Robinson was troubled. He prepared to abandon the campaign, but relented under pressure from Rickey, who remained loyal to his memories of the party of Lincoln. After Nixon's defeat, the candidate sent Robinson a engraved plaque in appreciation. Robinson sent Nixon 24 pounds of Chock Full o' Nuts coffee.

As the 1960s progressed, old political boundaries blurred and the civil rights synthesis disintegrated. As early as 1962, conflict between black and Jewish businessmen was surfacing in Harlem. When Sol Singer opened a steakhouse on 125th Street, local people protested what they saw as a threat to undersell an established black-owned restaurant; and Lewis Michaux, a bookseller and black nationalist, organized a protest at which picketers chanted "Jew go away—black man stay!" Robinson criticized the anti-Semitism in the *Amsterdam News*. "Anti-semitism is as rotten as anti-Negroism," he wrote. "It is a shame that, so far, none of the Negroes of Harlem have yet had the guts to say so in tones which could be heard throughout the city." This provoked the ire of insurgent separatists, who dismissed Robinson as a "so-called Negro."

The controversy was a straw in the wind. Robinson's universalist, evangelical morality led him to criticize Adam Clayton Powell as well as Bull Connor. As the civil rights movement split between moderates and militants, Robinson was left, characteristically, somewhere in the middle. In a polarizing political culture, his attempt to follow a moderate course of personal probity and political independence left him increasingly vulnerable to caricature as a Hamlet—or an Uncle Tom. The absurdity of this must have rankled beyond words.

Robinson believed that separatist sentiments were far less prevalent in the black community than white journalists suggested. The fascination with the Nation of Islam baffled him. "Where do the Mus-

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lims get their money? Who finances them?" he asked in 1963, suspecting that black separatism was the best thing that had ever happened to white segregationists. And white segregationists were also achieving a new respectability in national politics. Robinson thought that George Wallace was "a madman" and Barry Goldwater "a bigot," but he didn't much like Malcolm X either. "Malcolm has big audiences, but no constructive program," he told *The New York Herald Tribune* in 1964. "He is terribly militant on soapboxes, on streetcorners of Negro ghettoes. Yet, he has not faced Southern police dogs in Birmingham . . . nor gone to jail for freedom."

By early 1964, sensing "a new bitterness among blacks," Robinson mourned that "every dire development which I had envisioned . . . is coming to pass." When Malcolm was killed, Rampersad argues, Robinson's notion of black manhood was superseded by another. The ideal of a patient stoicism, and the universalist dream of integration and racial justice, were being abandoned. "Instead," Rampersad writes, "power was the great goal; and justice seemed to demand an element of retribution, or revenge." Through the late 1960s, Robinson persisted in trying to sustain his universalist vision; his attachment to the doomed candidacy of Nelson Rockefeller, the last liberal Republican on the national stage, epitomized the character of his quest.

If public affairs brought frustration, private life brought sadness and pain—and the sharpest challenge yet to Robinson's faith in a providentially ordered universe. Much of his suffering stemmed from his tormented relationship with his son Jackie Jr. The boy had to struggle all his life with the burden of being Jackie Robinson's firstborn, and never measuring up to his father's expectation or example. As he drifted into high school, his parents became convinced that he needed counseling and a special boarding school. "Sharon and David get as much mileage out of their ability as they can," Jack wrote a friend about his other children, "but Jackie is a little on the lazy side." For years, Jackie Jr. was in and out of special schools; once he ran away from home. He disappointed his parents (especially his father) with his apparent aimlessness. By 1965 father and son were barely speaking. Jackie Jr. joined the army and was sent to Vietnam, where he won a Purple Heart. Returning home, he still could not escape the shadow of his father: a letter from Rockefeller congratulated him for "adding a lustre of your own to the famous name you bear."

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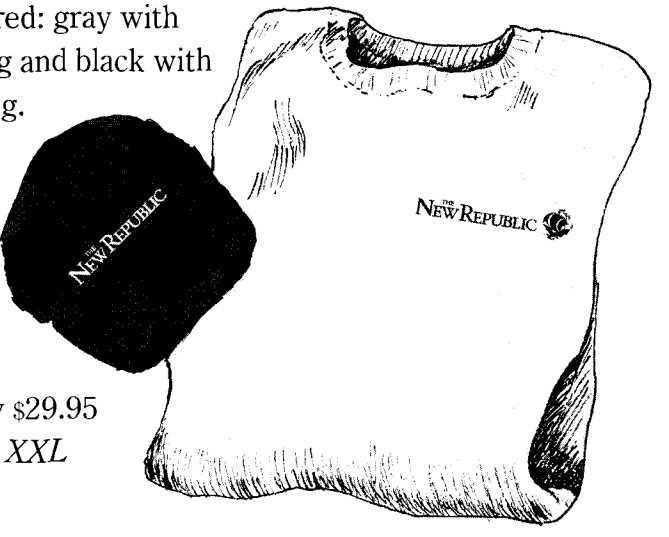

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Like many another veteran, Jackie Jr. carried unseen scars. He fled to Colorado, came back, couldn't seem to hold down a job, remained a shadowy presence in the Robinsons' bright suburban home. When he walked down the street, he stayed "close to cover," never straying too far from the feeling of security that the buildings provided. And he took to drugs. In March 1968, he was arrested by the police in Stamford for possession of marijuana and heroin. For two years he fought drug addiction, undergoing a rigorous rehabilitation at the Daytop Center in Seymour, Connecticut. By the spring of 1971 he had beaten the habit, had even become an assistant regional director at Daytop and an eloquent lecturer on drug abuse. Then, at 2:00 A.M. on June 17, he was killed in an automobile accident on the Merritt Parkway. His mother withdrew into grief. His father cleaved to his faith—at what inner cost is anyone's guess.

The most grueling test came from within Robinson's own body. Almost as soon as he quit baseball, he discovered that he had diabetes. He could no longer eat a pint of ice cream at one sitting, or "the pies and cake." This was the beginning of a series of ailments that left him in nearly constant pain by middle age. By the time he was in his 40s, he was frequently using a cane. When he was 51, he had no pulse in his legs, and he was dying of advanced heart disease. June 4, 1972 was old-timers' day at Chavez Ravine, Los Angeles. Robinson "walked like a man of 80," according to a sportswriter on the scene. Someone tossed him a ball; it hit him in the head and knocked his Dodger cap off. He was nearly blind from diabetes. Five months later he was dead.

Yet it is impossible to end the story there. A re-examination Robinson's life provokes reexamination of his worldview. It reminds us of an ethical idiom that has slipped away—or worse, become platitudinous. I am referring to the old belief in patient labor and stoical determination, in decency and fair play. These words have lost their luster; they have been abused in apologetics for power. The capacious word "Christian," which Robinson claimed unreservedly, has meanwhile been captured by fundamentalist ideologues, or reduced to a mere pejorative by dogmatic liberals. Since the Reaganite takeover of the Republican party, the liberal evangelical tradition has virtually disappeared from public discourse. But Robinson epitomized its enduring worth.

During the past year, the fiftieth anniversary of Robinson's crossing the color line, various public rituals commemorated his achievement. Most transformed him into an Olympian presence, floating above the contentious realm of social debate. This canonization distorts his larger significance. Robinson's values had specific political and cultural meanings, and they cut to the heart of our own controversies. He was a meritocrat and an integrationist. He exemplified the tradition of Martin Luther King, not the tradition of Malcolm X. It is idle to speculate what positions Robinson might have taken on particular issues of public policy, but one thing is certain: he rejected racial separatism in any form. If Spike Lee is thinking of a remake of *The Jackie Robinson Story*, he might think again.

What remains most striking about Robinson is the bracing atmosphere of moral clarity surrounding the man, the amazing consistency between his deeds and his words. His worldview issued in a plain-spoken morality that contrasts all too sharply with the public idioms of recent American history—the psychobabble, the lies, and the terminal cynicism of the post-Watergate era, now joined by the cyberspeak, the globaloney, and the free-market mumbo-jumbo of our fin-de-siècle. At such a moment, when poses and provocations are mistaken for moral courage, it is worth remembering a man who not only hit an outside curveball to the opposite field, but also did his damnedest to be brave, clean, and reverent.

JACKSON LEARS teaches history at Rutgers University and is working on a book about gambling and luck in American cultural history.

Golden Events

BY DANIEL J. KEVLES

Image and Logic: A Material Culture of Microphysics by Peter Galison

(University of California Press, 955 pp., $34.95)

Peter Galison drives an original cut through the great trunk of twentieth-century physics, exposing how its practitioners have gone about finding, identifying, and comprehending the elementary particles that comprise the building blocks of matter and energy. The story of the march of theory from atoms to quarks is a familiar one, but the history of the instruments that have been indispensable to the experiments, the logistics of the march, is not at all familiar. Galison here recounts the development of the "material culture" of the modern physics laboratory, delineating in rich detail how its machines and its gases and its chemicals and its electronics were devised and exploited to produce facts about nature.

Galison attends to what he calls the "outer laboratory," the larger institutional setting of the grand particle accelerators such as the one at the Fermi National Laboratory in Illinois, or the gargantuan Superconducting Super Collider that was under construction in Texas, before Congress killed it in 1993. But his principal site of inquiry is the "inner laboratory": the micro-environment of the working physicists and their instruments. He is concerned with the relations of that laboratory to industry, to the military, to cultural forces that shape the study of nature. He analyzes those relations in ways that are fresh and learned and illuminated by his passionate absorption with the enterprise of physics.

Galison draws on cultural studies of science, anthropology, philosophy of science, and the history of painting, photography, and architecture, for the most part making what he uses his own. He rightly takes instruments to express not only technical purposes, but also cultural values (including the instrument-maker's). In Galison's hands, basic physics is not a mere tool of its powerful patrons, subordinated to these extra-scientific ends. It is, at the level of research programs and operations, coequal with them, embedded in the same history, appropriating their technologies and managerial practices and returning with its own innovations.

Galison's book roams through experimental particle physics in Britain, Germany, France, and the United States. It moves across a breathtaking array of subjects: cloud chambers and bubble chambers, quantum electrodynamics

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and simulation theory, hydrogen bomb-making and radar devices, computer languages and management programs. Galison deals with this disparate material with authority, though I can't say that he masters his own book with the same control. It is a huge, sprawling, inadequately disciplined work, diffuse and repetitious in argument, and far too long even for its enormous subject and its enormous reach. And yet it is a bold and at times a brilliant book, a tour de force. One need not be a physicist to profit from it, though some scientific literacy helps.

Image and Logic justifies its author's contention that "by bringing instruments front and center, we get a different history," not only a departure from the commonplace technical accounts but also a study that is "part labor history, part sociology, and part epistemology." It is a history of physics from the shop-floor, using this perspective to get at the organization of work in the laboratory, the control of experiments, and, perhaps most important, the nature of experiment itself, a subject that Galison first explored in 1987 in *How Experiments End*. He demonstrates again and again that "the very category 'experiment' will not stay still." Indeed, neither does the meaning of "experimenter" or "author." All have been historically contingent, fatefully joined to the imperatives and the textures of the instruments in the physicist's workplace.

The instruments that preoccupy Galison are the devices that detect the elementary particles in cosmic rays and in the beams of high-energy accelerators. These detectors lie at the heart of experimental particle physics, shaping how the experiments are organized and linking the experimenter to the phenomena. The Nobel laureate Carlo Rubbia once observed that these devices express what is in the "guts" of the experimenter, adding: "In the case of painters, it's painting. In the case of sculptors, it's sculpture. In the case of experimental physics, it's detectors."

Historically, physicists have used two different types of particle detectors. Galison denotes the distinctive character of each by the terms of his title: "image" and "logic." In the modern laboratory, there have been image detectors and logic detectors. Image detectors reveal phenomena by representing them in visual form—producing, for example, pictures of tracks through a gas. Logic detectors record particle events in electronic chambers that generate counts rather than pictures, much as a radioactivity indicator produces clicks. Electronic logic circuits discern the nature of the events that precipitate the counts. Galison lucidly explains the development of the principal devices in the image tradition—the cloud chamber early in the century, photographic emulsions in the 1930s and 1940s, the bubble chamber in the 1950s and 1960s. And he explores the evolution of the logic tradition, which progressed through a far more disparate variety of devices, by focusing on several exemplary types, notably the spark chamber. He also pursues what amounted to a hybridization of the two traditions in the Time Projection Chamber that was designed, built, and operated between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s.

The cloud chamber, as used in particle physics, was developed during the first decade of this century by C.T.R. Wilson, a physicist in the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University. A technology devised for one purpose that was adapted to another, Wilson's device grew out of his interest in the atmospheric conditions that he observed and photographed on walks in the Scottish Highlands. He sought to create phenomena such as fogs and coronas in the laboratory by suddenly expanding the volume of a glass chamber containing air supersaturated with water. Galison emphasizes that Wilson's research was shaped not only by his fascination with the physics of the outdoors, but also by the Cavendish's devotion to ion physics—that is, to explorations of the behavior of electrically charged atoms in gases. Wilson's studies led to the finding that drops would form on ions in the water-heavy air, which was the result that transformed the cloud chamber into an instrument of particle detection. Whatever passed through the chamber that might cause ions to form—notably X-rays or other charged particles—would be made visible by the drops that dotted the track of ionization. The tracks could be photographed and then searched for particle events of special interest. ("Golden events," they came to be called.) Cloud chamber pictures gave physicists a sense that, as the cosmologist Arthur S. Eddington remarked, we can "almost see" particles—which was scientifically thrilling at the time, when the particulate theory of matter was much debated.

The cloud chamber proved to be an excellent instrument for research with cosmic rays. Those rays are high-energy products of nature's accelerators, and in the 1920s they were conclusively shown to be bombarding the earth from all heavenly directions. Physicists studied cosmic ray flux around the globe, deploying cloud chambers on ships and mountain tops as well as in their labs. In

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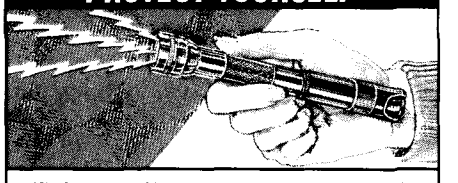
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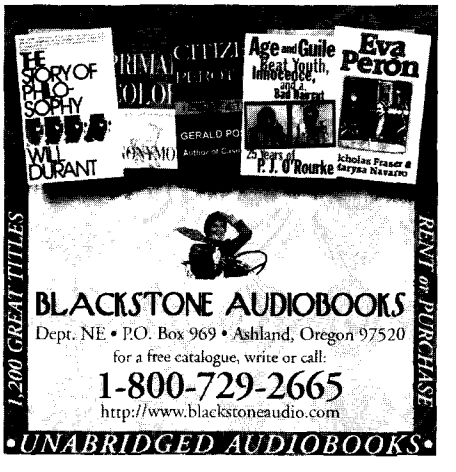
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More Mist

With her last backward glance still unaccounted for,
This lingering of misty morning light
Adds more mist where already there was more,
Making smooth hills and sky merge in my sight,
Making me once again relive the day
She walked through that green gateway to the sea
As if intending just to visit, not to stay,
As if her going could return with me.
This lingering of misty morning light
Swirling above the hills, churns the blown sky
Into a surging sea; within my sight
I merge with her and cannot tell which I is I,
The I remaining or the I that's gone,
As some soft disembodied whip-poor-will sings on
Inside the mist that breeds more mist and more
With her last backward glance still unaccounted for.

ROBERT PACK

1932, a junior physicist at the California Institute of Technology named Carl Anderson detected the positron in his cloud chamber; it was the first of many such elementary particles whose existence the instrument would reveal. By then, Wilson's cloud chamber had become principally a machine for research with high-energy radiation. As Galison explains the impulse behind the shift, "For hunters, snow tracks tell about their quarry, not the quality of the snow."

Photographic emulsions—essentially small sheets of film—were fashioned in 1937 into a means of detecting the tracks of charged particles by Marietta Blau, a Viennese physicist. As a woman and a Jew, Blau was professionally marginalized, and she fell even more to the periphery of research after she fled Austria in 1938, making her way eventually to Mexico City; but Galison restores her to well-deserved notice. Blau began her career in radiology, which provided her with a deep knowledge of ray physics and film and, according to Galison, "a lasting commitment to the persuasive power of the image." Blau's emulsions offered several advantages over the cloud chamber. Cloud chambers were bulky, they had to be triggered to expand at the right moment in order to record the passage of a particle, and they registered very high-energy particles faintly, if at all. Photographic emulsions were compact, and they recorded charged particle trajectories constantly. They also displayed very high-energy tracks that could be clearly seen through a microscope. Using an emulsion, Blau and an assistant obtained a golden event, a star-like trace dramatically revealing the occurrence of a nuclear disintegration provoked by a cosmic ray.

World War II transformed high-energy physics, showering its practitioners with unprecedented federal funding, producing stratospheric expectations about the scale of research projects, and leading to the construction of the large, powerful accelerators that quickly came to characterize the outer laboratory in the postwar era. The wartime mobilization of physicists has tended to be interpreted as an interruption in the development of basic physics. Not so, Galison says. He argues that the development of electronic instrumentation in work on the atomic bomb and microwave radar helped to form a vital connection between prewar research and postwar research. War work taught physicists to appreciate the approach of engineers to big technological projects. It accustomed them to the necessity of subjecting the workplace to the requirements of managerial models. It elevated theorists to equal power with experimenters in the development of research agendas, and it provided experimenters with a trove of new technologies, many of them adaptable to particle detection.

Emulsion technology, which also emerged from the war somewhat strengthened as an instrument, was made an essential tool of particle detection by the British physicist Cecil F. Powell. In the late 1930s, Powell had turned from the cloud chamber to emulsions as his instrument of choice, exploiting them to study cosmic rays high up in the Swiss Alps. Galison notes that Powell devised an emulsion detection *system*: he obtained thickened emulsions from the Ilford and Kodak companies and arranged them into stacks so as to permit the tracking of particles in three dimensions. He taught people unskilled in physics—they were almost all women—to scan the emulsions with microscopes, looking at different depths for particle events of potential scientific significance. In 1947, Powell's emulsion system won him the Nobel Prize for revealing a type of meson in cosmic rays that fitted into existing particle theory but had not yet been detected in man-made accelerators.

Galison points out that for the "scanning girls," to use Powell's term, emulsion detection was a kind of routinized, almost assembly-line work; and that emulsions became part of postwar big-accelerator physics at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at Berkeley. He observes that physicists such as Powell nevertheless remained devoted to cosmic-ray physics with emulsions, because they preserved "a place for European physics in general, and a place for small groups of autonomous researchers more specifically. For several years, the emulsion method remained the key to survival.... It kept alpine cosmic ray stations and European physics alive."

It was in the hope of maintaining a small-scale particle physics that Donald Glaser, at the University of Michigan, invented the bubble chamber. "I didn't want to join an army of people working at the big machines," he told Galison. "I decided that if I were clever enough I could invent something that could extract the information from cosmic rays and you could work in a nice peaceful environment rather than in the factory of big machines." Bubble chambers contain liquid hydrogen superheated above its boiling point and maintained as a liquid by high pressure. When a sufficiently energetic particle passes through, the hydrogen along its path is vaporized into bubbles that mark the trajectory of the particle and its high-energy products. Liquid hydrogen, which is far more dense than the gas in a cloud chamber, offers many more targets for the particles to collide with. So do emulsions—but since they must be exposed to cosmic rays for long periods to register events of interest, they present a tangle of tracks among which the scanner must discern any of possible signficance. Bubble chambers, by contrast, could be made responsive for short lengths of time.

As it turned out, they could not be automatically triggered to responsiveness by the arrival of a cosmic ray—a fea-

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ture of the apparatus that ironically defeated Glaser's original purpose, as Galison observes. Glaser's disappointment was compounded by the fact that bubble chambers worked very well with accelerators, since they could be made operational when the machine was spewing forth a particle beam, and it was doubly compounded by the way in which their deployment in high-energy accelerator laboratories, notably at Berkeley, affected the relationship of physicists to their experiments.

The prime mover at Berkeley was Luis Alvarez. A veteran of the wartime radar and A-bomb projects, and an active participant in cold war defense science, Alvarez was comfortable with engineers, and attentive to managerial requirements; and he was an enthusiast of the postwar opportunities—in all, a paragon of the new big-physics group chief. By the late 1950s, he had built the bubble chamber business at Berkeley into "an industrial scale" enterprise, to use Galison's apt description, with a day-shift crew and a night-shift crew working in a complex organization of physicists, engineers, technicians, and scanners. Operating with liquid hydrogen under pressure, bubble chambers were dangerous; safety imperatives put the Berkeley chamber in a huge steel hull that rested in an enormous vacuum tank, and subjected its use to a broad array of rules and procedures. The environment of hazard gave an edge to engineers in operating the detector, and it discouraged the experimental physicists' tendency to conduct experiments in a technically opportunistic fashion.

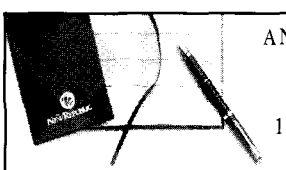
While bubble chambers turned into Brobdignags, the spark chamber enterprises, in the tradition of logic detectors, remained small in scale and affordable long after the war, and so they sprang up at numerous sites in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Many physicists preferred logic counters because they revealed their results quickly, in contrast to bubble chambers, which produced literally hundreds of thousands of pictures that had to be developed and scanned; so that, as the Nobel laureate Burton Richter complained, physicists "didn't know anything about what was happening in the experiment until a year or two after it was already over." Moreover, logic counters did not rely on the single golden event. ("Anything can happen once," a physicist remarked.) Instead, they recorded multiple events that could be statistically tested for significance, a task in which the computer was increasingly enlisted. Galison points out that suitable computer technology came out of the military's need for machines to process huge quantities of data in real time—say, from the surfaces of a rocket or an aircraft—and store it on high speed tape for later analysis. He maintains that computer-assisted logic counters appealed to many experimental physicists precisely because they permitted them to monitor events as they were occurring, and to modify the apparatus accordingly, and, in all, to maintain control over the experiment.

Inevitably, however, logic counter groups came to resemble bubble counter labs in their size and in the diversity of their staff, and the trend was intensified by the development of detectors that joined together the traditions of logic and image. Galison recounts the cementing of the union in the Time Projection Chamber at the Stanford Linear Accelerator, a remarkable computerized device that electronically manipulated multiple particle tracks, identifying, characterizing, and determining the precise trajectories of the particles that made them, even as it instantaneously provided the information to the machine's operators and permitted them to respond to it as the experiment proceeded. The level of complexity in the detector surpassed the capacities of any single individual or even institution.

The TPC was the creation of what Galison calls a "decentered network" spread over multiple institutions and managed with methods derived from large-scale military development projects such as the production of the Polaris missile system. Indeed, Galison writes, "strictly speaking, no 'one' was in charge; and the project consequently had to proceed in a collaborative mode that required detailed, constant, and powerful intervention from the engineers at each step. These changes came hard, both for the physicists and for the engineers." What also came hard was that the TPC involved between 100 and 200 physicists and a correspondingly large complement of engineers and technicians—a three-to-fivefold multiplication over the size of Alvarez's research group.

Still-greater decentralization was fostered by the introduction into high-energy physics of computerized simulations of experiments, an innovation that Galison lucidly details. The simulations depended on so-called Monte Carlo methods, a term coined in the late 1940s to refer to the mathematical approaches that physicists had been devising to analyze the reactions that would occur in a hydrogen bomb, reactions that could not be studied in the laboratory. The simulations employed physical theories of how reactions were likely to proceed and then calculated how they did proceed by feeding random numbers into a computer to realize the likelihood. They permitted physicists to see how a thermonuclear reaction would develop over time, virtually microsecond by microsecond. A single individual would require more than two hundred years to carry out the computations for such a reaction. Galison notes that, in a sense, such estimates of calculating time figured crucially in the decision to devote vast resources to the development of electronic computers. In the context of the cold war, simulations drove the rapid increase in computing power and the enlarged computing power in turn allowed the simulation of ever more complex processes.

Monte Carlo simulations became a versatile tool of high-energy physics. They were used to test designs of costly, supersophisticated detectors such as the TPC before they were built, exploiting known particle physics and mathematical models of the detector's behavior to examine, for example, its capacity and efficiency. They were also exploited to determine the results that known physics would produce in an actual experiment: a comparison of the mock outcome with the real outcome would reveal whether the particle interaction under scrutiny required a revision in the physics. Galison notes that such simulations were at once theoretical, since they used mathe-



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matical modeling, and experimental, since they generated measures of physical outcomes. The simulations took place in a computer and chewed on data that was in computerized form. To do high-energy physics, simulation scientists did not have to be at the site of the lab. They could be anywhere—thus pushing the decentralization of experiment to a further extreme of ubiquity.

Monte Carlo simulations comprised what Galison calls a "trading zone," a concept that he has appropriated from cultural anthropology to account for how scientists in disparate fields can communicate with each other at least locally. Relations in such a zone are mediated by language—first, by a pidgin, and later, as relations solidify, by a creole. Galison expands these notions of language to include laboratory instruments and methods, which in the zone between different fields of science can express "wordless pidgins" and "wordless creoles." He explores a variety of specific trades that occurred across the multiple fields that he covers. Thus, "the wordless creole of film tracks" tied together the skills and the practices of work with bubble chambers, nuclear emulsions, and cloud chambers. Even theoretical constructs could serve a trading-zone purpose, he argues, pointing to a form of Quantum Chromodynamics devised by Richard P. Feynman and Richard Field that made the formal theory usable to experimenters. And Monte Carlo simulations, hybrids of theory and experiment, played "an important integrative function" in the border regions between such otherwise separated activities as nuclear weapons development, weather prediction, industrial chemistry, and the study of elementary particles.

Galison argues convincingly that the progressive development of more complicated detectors increasingly distanced experimenters from the control of the principal dimensions of their experiments—the apparatus at their core, the analysis of the data that they produced, and the operations of the workplace in which both were embedded. The trend was evident even outside big physics in Powell's development of the emulsion system in the 1940s. The fabrication of suitable photographic emulsions was virtually an esoteric art, one that most emulsion physicists of necessity had to cede to industrial chemists. The assignment of scanning to an assembly-line of scientifically unskilled women removed the physicist from the perusal of initial data, establishing ambiguity in credit for the detection of important results. Galison notes that emulsion physicists tended to distinguish between events being "found"—the labor of the scanning girls—and phenomena being "discovered," locating the action of the former in the passive voice and the action of the latter in the active one. And so even the small-scale experiments conducted with film emulsions and cosmic rays had splintered into multiple parts, including physicists, scanners, emulsion chemists, theorists.

On the industrial scale of the bubble chamber and the hybrid detectors such the Time Projection Chamber, the individual experimenter lost control over building, maintaining, adjusting, and modifying the apparatus. Indeed, not only was no one in control at the TPC, but the experiment, as Galison describes it, was everywhere: in Los Angeles, New Haven, and Tokyo (as well as Palo Alto). The experiment was wherever people contributed to it. For the physicist, therefore, experiments became data analysis alone. The more the computer was used to extract data from accelerator runs, the more the task of analysis moved away from the physicist and toward the scanning shop floor. Monte Carlo simulations added another dimension to the trend, interposing the computer between experimenters, including their capacity for analytical thought, and their results.

In an epigraph to his book, Galison quotes Alan Thorndike, the leader of a world-class bubble chamber group: "The experimenter, then, is not one person, but a composite." The implications for credit and authorship were profound. Even with cloud chambers and emulsions, data on a particular phenomenon were gleaned from many labs spread over numerous countries. The practice was necessary, Galison puts it, to differentiate "the golden events from those of fool's gold"; yet it blurred the signature of any individual or group in a discovery. Latter-day experiments, mounted by literally dozens or even several hundred physicists, rendered traditional ideas of authorship and credit virtually meaningless. The TPC collaboration, feeling compelled to address the problem, established a Standing Committee for Assignment of Talks—SCAT—with a set of rules governing who qualified as an author as well as who could report on the results of an experiment and in which venues.

Galison calls the TPC "an experiment in postmodernism." In his lexicon, the modernist laboratory—say, the bubble chamber installation at Berkeley—was characterized by a centrally structured hierarchy that governed the running of experiments to the publication of results. Moreover, like the architecture of high modernism, the bubble chamber reached for a unity and a simplicity of form. It was "essentially a pure or monolithic technology" that resisted the eclecticism that came from meshing with other technologies like electronic counters. What made the TPC postmodern, Galison writes, is that, although it involved large apparatus, it was "locally synchronized, globally dispersed work." Moreover, it was a decidedly eclectic piece of apparatus, constructed by multiple institutions, operated coequally by physicists and engineers, depending altogether on computing software, and producing results for which no individual or even small group could legitimately claim responsibility.

The imputation of postmodernism has a certain ring of plausibility, but it is difficult to see what the label adds except to identify the trend with a fashionable and increasingly obscure category. One can think of much earlier large-scale projects of scientific research—the construction of star maps of the heavens or geological maps of the American continent—that adumbrated the headless decentralization of the TPC lab and the extensive pooling and analysis of data. Closer to our own time, and to the high-tech features of the TPC, there have been extensive space-probe efforts, which required the integration of science and engineering and rested on multiple sites of instrument development, the internationalization of data, and computerized operations from design to data analysis. Should we say that these headless operations were "postmodern," too? I don't mind the association of postmodernism with headlessness; but surely it would be better just to ask how these enterprises work, how they shape the development of knowledge, and how they define the meaning, in their contexts, of being a scientist or an engineer.

Galison is more penetrating in drawing on his account of instruments to challenge two salient schools in the philosophy of science, the positivists and the antipositivists. He stresses that the cluster of skills, practices, and technologies of the laboratory maintains a life and a momentum of its own—a life and a momentum that defy the positivist view that the unification of science makes for its strength and the antipositivist contention, following the late Thomas Kuhn, that disunity in science leads to its instability. Science is essentially disunified, in Galison's view. High-level theory and experimental practice often proceed out of synch and without close reference to each other. But it is "the intercalation of *different* patterns of argument that is responsible for its strength and coherence." Indeed, its vitality depends on its disunity.

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Galison reports physicists' responses to the coming of the putatively postmodern laboratory in terms such as "profound shock," "painful mutation," "terrifyingly unstable" materials, and "anxiety." His vocabulary here seems unjustifiably fraught. Still, he is surely right to discern a discomfort on the part of many experimental physicists in the last half-century with the transformation of experimental practices, work, and organization. He is also persuasive in taking them to task for their laments, writing toward the end of his book that at every stage of the development of high-energy particle physics, some laboratory scientists "have bemoaned the loss of a previous Edenic era," in which there were "groups instead of individuals, networks instead of isolated laboratories, factories instead of workshops, computers instead of notebooks, engineers instead of technicians, multinational collaborations instead of personally acquainted teams."

But Galison is not a nostalgist and not a sentimentalist. He deeply respects the real conditions of scientific progress. "Would we be better off without computers, simulations, logic circuits, and golden events?" he wisely asks. "When the norms, values, and standards of experimentation stagnate for 50 years, when they *stop* changing, then the discipline will be dead. Each age remakes the laboratory in its own image, and the laboratory reacts to change the world around it." And this, in its realistic way, is an expression of idealism, too.

DANIEL J. KEVLES teaches at the California Institute of Technology. His new book, *The Baltimore Case: A Trial of Politics, Science, and Character*, will be published by Norton this year.

Belle du Jour

BY DANIEL AARON

The Art of Scandal: The Life and Times of Isabella Stewart Gardner by Douglass Shand-Tucci

(HarperCollins, 351 pp., $27.50)

Isabella Stewart Gardner "scandalized" Boston in the last half of the nineteenth century by her calculated audacities. Despite her impeccable connections, she was, literally and temperamentally, an outsider, but she eventually metamorphosed herself into the museum that she designed and inhabited. In her heyday, between 1880 and 1910, she moved through clouds of fair and ill report, and her biographers haven't quite managed to separate the real and legendary "Mrs. Jack." Some of her contemporaries saw her plain, but even they buffed up her virtues and defects. George Santayana is one of the few exceptions:

> She modelled herself on the great ladies of French and Italian society, as she had seen them in her travels or during her residence in Venice. She was far from beautiful, but she knew that this was no obstacle to dressing magnificently and boldly, or being positively alluring; her clothes (for the evening) filled Boston with alarm and with envy. She was not of good family, although professedly related to the royal house of Stuart; but she gave Boston a lesson in being aristocratic, and surrounding herself with interesting people, strangers, artists, musicians, and anyone who was either distinguished or agreeable. If the old Bostonians didn't like it, they needn't come, but they came, if they were asked.

Little written about her before or since has done more than flesh out this sketch.

Douglass Shand-Tucci's industrious examination of "Belle" Gardner's life and times boldly plunges into areas where Santayana and her two previous biographers, Morris Carter and Louise Hall Tharp, declined to tread. He explores her "inner life," what lay behind her "very high church" Anglicanism, her ambivalent views of Boston society, the source and the nature of her devotion to the works of art that she avidly collected. He is at once her biographer and her advocate. He affirms and speculates without reserve, and dares to paint in words the woman John Singer Sargent famously painted on canvas.

When facts are sparse, gossip hardens into history, such as the reports of her leading a lion on the leash down a Boston thoroughfare. Photographs show her poised on a ladder while supervising the construction of her "palace" or lounging in a gondola on a Venetian lagoon. Seldom in repose, she is forever arriving and departing swathed in Shand-Tucci's adjectives. She can be rude, arrogant, vain, selfish, charming, generous, penurious, sadistic, imperious, flamboyant, and sibylline, an energetic opponent and trusty friend; but she is always engagingly human and brimming with life.

The Art of Scandal follows Gardner's ascent from her childhood in New York City, where she was born in 1840, until her death in 1924. The Stewarts were rich, but their money was "new." Hence this granddaughter of a Brooklyn tavern keeper was "reticent" about her immediate forebears while claiming kinship with Scottish kings. When she was 16, she was taken abroad and "finished" in Paris. Neither then nor later did she pretend to be an "intellectual." She visited galleries and palaces, learned how to dress well, and met John Lowell Gardner, Jr. of Boston. She married him two years later, in 1860. If not a love-match, it was, in Shand-Tucci's opinion, "a step up the social ladder."

The Civil War left the couple unscathed. Belle Gardner claimed later she wasn't old enough to remember it, and Jack Gardner, without dishonor, paid for a substitute to avoid it. The death of their first and only child, not quite two, in 1865 bulked larger for them than the national catastrophe. Travel proved to be the anodyne for grieving parents who thereafter crisscrossed the world. Jack Gardner, proud of his dashing wife, encouraged her whims and ignored the gossip that increasingly swirled about her. Early in the 1880s, her intense friendship with the Italian-born American writer Francis Marion Crawford raised Boston eyebrows, and enhanced the legend of her courageous, outrageous assertiveness. What might have goaded or restrained their unlikely transgression? They did read Dante together; but Shand-Tucci's breathless account of the affair is guesswork. Neither appears to have been visibly scorched by the experience. Crawford went on to write a string of popular novels, and Gardner, whom Henry James likened to a "locomotive—with a Pullman car attached," moved closer to her grand design: to collect "masterpieces" and to build a palazzo to house them.

Since she exists pretty much in the perceptions of those who liked or disliked her, there is more than one Isabella Gardner in *The Art of Scandal*. Her "genius" boils down to her good taste and powers of discrimination, and even more to her knack for spotting and drawing out the genius of others. A few of them became "soul mates," Shand-Tucci's term

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for relationships in which "erotic energy" is converted into spirit. The pages that he devotes to her collaboration with Bernard Berenson in tracking down and securing "masterpieces" illustrate this process. She had helped launch him in the early '80s, had dropped him for a time (put off by an egotism no less robust than her own), and then resumed her patronage even as his critics, including her husband, marked him a Polish Jewish parvenu and a crook. It was enough for her that the brilliant connoisseur, whose self-serving ambitions she understood quite well, had committed himself to her vision of a grand museum and shared a "picture habit" no less addictive than morphine. Their dreams, he assured her, coincided "perfectly."

Berenson didn't find her endearing. Few did; but for many of her male friends she incarnated a life-force. Sargent's full-length painting of her (he called it *Woman–an Enigma*) captures something of her air of mystery and her elliptical grace. Two strands of pearls are roped around her waist, her "beautiful arms" (the words are Ellery Sedgwick's) "glowing against a background that might have been the heart of a lotus." Jack Gardner thought the painter had displayed too much of what one reporter called the "handsomest neck, shoulders, and arms" in Boston, and he removed the portrait from public view, but Sargent's painting, for all its display of flesh, is more Delphic than literal.

Noticeably played down in Shand-Tucci's book is the earthy and rather jolly subject of Louise Hall Tharp's *Mrs. Jack* (1965), a bustling cheerful hostess and a conscientious wife, the merchant's daughter who never lost her "inborn sense of merchandise." She stays on good terms with influential members of Boston's entrenched elite and takes care to keep her indiscretions pardonable. (Jack Gardner, incidentally, is a much less marginal figure in *Mrs. Jack* than in *The Art of Scandal.*) Shand-Tucci's Isabella, though robust enough, is a grander figure—a natural aristocrat and subject to epiphanies. She is also the confidante of her largely youthful retinue, and the point of contact between Boston's heterosexual and homosexual publics.

Shand-Tucci dealt exhaustively with the latter group in *Boston Bohemia, 1881-1900,* which appeared in 1995. In that book he presented the architect Ralph Adams Cram against the background of "Cold Roast Boston" and a web of subcultures. His new book is an extended footnote to that work of prodigious research. Some of the same names, episodes, and quotations crop up in both books. The author knows his way around Boston's "gay," "aesthetic," and "decadent" communities at the end of the century and is privy (as he says Gardner was) to the public and private lives of their membership, most of them artists, designers, poets, and assorted aesthetes of "unclear" sexual orientation. They read Swinburne and Huysmans, entertained Oscar Wilde, smoked hashish and sipped absinthe on occasion; they fancied the rituals and the paraphernalia of Anglo-Catholicism. He decodes the symbols of this indeterminate gay culture, understands the sexual import of its arts-and-crafts terminology, and can tell you how St. Sebastian became a cult figure for gay men.

And hovering over this troop of aesthetes, with its mystique of religion and sports, was the godmother herself, "more bohemian than blue-stocking," and sympathetic encourager of its "discreet gay rebellion." She stayed well within the precincts of proper Boston, but selectively she welcomed to Fenway Court talented exotics (Asians, Blacks, Jews, Portuguese, Irish) not ordinarily encountered then in Boston drawing rooms. Shand-Tucci suspects that her open-house policy was prompted by memories of being kept at arm's length herself by Boston's social monitors; she could flout them by courting the kinds of people they didn't care to know.

Not that she played the rebel or jeered at Boston's arbiters. One of her signal accomplishments, Shand-Tucci suggests, was to provide a "cosmopolitan common ground where the puritan and bohemian might happily ferment together." She wasn't the first to introduce old and new Bostonians to each other, of course. But by opening up, in Henry James's words, her "wonderfully gathered and splendidly lodged" treasures to a fairly heterogeneous group of visitors, and favoring neither Saints nor Strangers, she acted as a kind of social dissolvent.

Shand-Tucci finds her "fascinating." He cannot say enough about her infinite variety. He looks for something deep and dark beneath her diamonds and furs. Yet Berenson's "Serpent of the Charles" was no Cleopatra to her friends Henry Adams and Henry James, both of whom enjoyed her company but contemplated her without rapture. The former considered her the "youngest and spryest" of their peers, but a "wrinkled old fairy all the same." The latter approved of "her admirable ease, temper, *facilité à vivre,*" but thought her too amiable to become fashionable: "She tries too hard and listens too sympathetically, bless her innocent (after all) heart." This picture jars with Shand-Tucci's; but it accords with the woman who liked the company of handsome young men not because they were gay or decadent, but because she hated to be old. They made her feel as if she were one of them, at least in spirit. This was the Gardner who protested that she was too young to remember the Civil War, who drove fast horses, loved to dance, arranged boxing matches, cheered for the Boston Red Sox, smoked Turkish cigarettes, and drank beer. Henry James pegged her accurately as an innocent.

Shand-Tucci makes much of her enchanting contralto voice and her Paris gowns and her startling Boston dovecotes. One tires of the fulsome endorsement, the blizzard of exclamation points, the arch locutions ("What was it Nietzsche said?"), the gratuitous confidences and nudging interpolations and convoluted sentences. All the same, if Shand-Tucci cannot leave well enough alone, and passes too easily from surmise to certainty, and snoops about like one of Henry James's nosy narrators, he is, as he claims to be, a "historian" and, more, a zealous cultural archeologist of a Boston unseen or skirted by previous excavators. The story-line of *The Art of Scandal,* the exfoliation of an off-beat saint, is less revelatory or novel, in the end, than Shand-Tucci's excursions into the careers and the "pastimes peculiar" (Tharp's phrase) of Gardner's protégés. They add a dimension to the history of Boston's fin de siècle with its covert entertainments and its links, cultural and sexual, to Oxbridge and the continent. His Isabella the Patron is more convincing than his Isabella the Muse.

"Unaccountably," Shand-Tucci passingly observes, Hollywood has not yet discovered this "chatelaine" of Fenway Court, although, given her "mystery and enigma," it is hardly surprising. *The Art of Scandal* could be turned into a movie as readily as a tale by Henry James or Edith Wharton. Its main theme might be the building of the Museum on the Fenway, replete with the alarms, the setbacks, and the coups that figure in Gardner's great adventure, but there would be something in it for everyone: an obstreperous yet exquisitely sensitive heroine with a smidgen of Becky Sharp and Scarlett O'Hara; an extramarital affair; dramatic confrontations (racial, ethnic, sexual) between "society" and Bohemia; multicultural engagements; splendid balls and assemblages and masquerade parties; exotic travel sequences; cameo appearances by famous and notorious personages. Shand-Tucci would make a superlative consultant.

DANIEL AARON is professor emeritus of English at Harvard University.

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come from the northern suburbs of Detroit (the Birmingham–Bloomfield area). But, he told me, Michigan, a state school, had a duty to bring in children from around the state. Some students might not have the highest scores, but allowances should be made. Why shouldn't that policy include applicants from the center of Detroit?

His remarks made sense to me then; they make sense to me now. Michigan is a school for the entire state, and its student population should reflect this.

JERRY FLINT
New York, New York

To the editors:

For people who, like Jonathan Chait, think that the University of Michigan is "the Harvard of the West," let me be clear: Michigan State is not "the next step down in the state system" from the U. of M. Unprepared students (minorities or not) are not going to "stand a better chance of success" in East Lansing, particularly in the undergraduate program.

Why do the maize-and-blue Wolverines always need to remind themselves of how wonderful they are? I am reminded of my favorite bumper sticker from my college days: You call it maize, we call it corn.

EDWARD F. ABOUFADEL
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Today's slave trade

To the editors:

Anthony Pagden opens his review of Hugh Thomas's *The Slave Trade* (December 22, 1997), with the statement that "[t]oday, slavery seems unthinkable. The idea that it might exist anywhere in the world would shock most people...." He unfortunately leaves intact the implication that slavery has, in fact, receded to history. It would be awful, though, to let this moment—in which our attention has become focused upon the peculiar institution—pass without noting that slavery continues to ruin lives in the 1990s.

In the northwest African Islamic Republic of Mauritania, black Africans are routinely captured, enslaved, and then tortured in retaliation for any resistance. Female slaves are regularly treated as their masters' sexual playthings. Opponents of slavery disappear, never to be heard from again.

Mauritania's apologists maintain that slavery was abolished there in 1980. Legally this is true; slavery had also been abolished twice before. It just hasn't "taken." As is evident from reports by ethnographers (Samuel Cotton, for example, who recently produced a videotaped account of slavery in Mauritania and Senegal), publications by human-rights groups (Human Rights Watch, for example, on "Mauritania's Campaign of Terror"), the accounts of escaped slaves, and testimony before the United States Congress consistently demonstrate, slavery and all its accoutrements are alive and well in northern Africa.

As we read Thomas's *The Slave Trade*, watch Spielberg's *Amistad*, let us remember that the "unthinkable" is still real.

RUSSELL HANSER
Boston, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Thanks for Anthony Pagden's fine review of Hugh Thomas's *The Slave Trade*. There was, however, one puzzling statement regarding the Bible and slavery. Professor Pagden states that since Jesus didn't say anything about slavery, "there was no obvious biblical ruling to be derived." Well, Paul and other New Testament writers had a lot to say, and it was all pro-slavery. (See 1 Corinthians 7:20–24, Luke 16:13, 1 Peter 2:18, Ephesians 6:5, 1 Timothy 6:1–2, Titus 2:9.)

In fact, no holy book condemns slavery as an institution, and while some nineteenth-century Christians strongly opposed it, the clear majority were in favor—and they had the Bible on their side.

JOHN GEORGE
Edmond, Oklahoma

Faulty figures

To the editors:

In the December 22, 1997, article on John Ashcroft ("The Gospel According to John"), Jason Zengerle writes that Ashcroft, while governor, was able to keep Missouri's tax burden the "forty-ninth lowest in the nation." Since only one state would have then had a heavier tax burden, one wonders how Ashcroft managed to remain so popular.

JOHN CUSHING
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Truth or consequences

To the editors:

I respectfully disagree with Michael Walzer's conclusions in his recent article "Judgment Days" (December 15, 1997). The establishment of truth commissions and reconciliation allows for a peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy. This is a major advance in conflict resolution. Through this process, to be sure, dictators are given an out, but so is everyone else. Using Walzer's own example of the trial of Louis XVI, what came with that trial was the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. Viewed in that context, was the trial worth it? No. The price of vengeance was too high.

DANIEL FRANKLIN
Atlanta, Georgia

Fantasy rights

To the editors:

In "Paper Chase" (December 15, 1997), Akhil Reed Amar explores the legality of using Ted Kaczynski's diaries against him in court. There are special circumstances in this case, however, that our statutes do not address: the problematic relationship between one's written self-representations and one's selfhood as it exists away from the writing desk. Memoirs and diaries of famous people can be notoriously unreliable when tested against outside evidence. A diary is often a place where fantasized or idealized selves are created and where the difference between reality and fiction is not carefully observed. There is something in the process of self-representation on paper that should render such documents questionable as legal evidence. This is one of the reasons the Fourth Amendment protects privacy.

BRUCE HENRICKSEN
New Orleans, Louisiana

Taxation with representation

To the editors:

Your editorial "Simple Does It" (December 15, 1997), correctly points to the problem of using the tax code for social engineering, but it wrongly lists "nontaxation of income from municipal bonds" as an example of "wasteful subsidies" in the federal tax code.

The policy in question has a valid political basis—buttressing federalism—that does not depend on efficiency. The exemption is a mutual one reflecting a decent allocation of sovereignty within our federal system: Uncle Sam should tax the interest paid on state debt no more than the states should tax the interest Uncle Sam pays to his creditors.

Greater federal taxation of the interest on municipal bonds (there has been some leakage already) would drive up the interest that local government units have to pay to build schools, roads, bridges, waterworks, etc.—the very infrastructure whose crumbling THE NEW REPUBLIC so often laments. With the federal government already soaking up the lion's share of taxes, low-interest borrowing affords localities one of their few sources of cash to spend on local priorities in a manner consistent with local sentiment.

JOHN R. MAGNUS
Washington, D.C.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

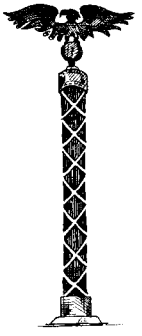
Stereo type

ONE OF THE FUNNIEST SCENES IN the film *Boogie Nights* takes place in a stereo store. Tape decks, amplifiers, and turntables are stacked up on wooden racks while woofers line an entire wall. As the white middle-aged manager looks on wearily, Buck Swope, a young black salesman, launches into a frenetic sales pitch to a scruffy customer. "This is Hi-Fi. Hiiii Fi-del-i-ty," he says, stressing each syllable. But to get "four quads" of real bass, he claims, you need to modify it with something called "TX 141." To demonstrate, Buck plays some screeching country music. Overwhelmed, the customer flees the store.

EVERYONE IN THE AUDIENCE laughed. Not me. That was *me* on screen. About nine months ago, I ventured into a shop in Washington, called High Tech, near Dupont Circle. Armed with more curiosity than expertise, I tried my best to look knowledgeable as I peered at dozens of tube amplifiers, preamplifiers, and CD players. The longer I looked, the more bewildered I became. As soon as a salesman approached me, I fled.

AFTER FURTHER FORAYS INTO audio stores, I conquered my fears. I even persuaded an opera-loving colleague to buy the exact same system I have, right down to the cables. Today, I'm sitting in my living room enjoying Mozart on my bi-wired Snell speakers with rear-firing tweeters driven by a Conrad-Johnson PF2 preamplifier and MF2200 power amplifier and a California Audio Labs CD player resting on four sorbothane half-globes that prevent external vibrations from introducing "jitter" into the music. The CD player looks as though it were levitating off the ground. Meanwhile, I've immersed myself in stacks of *Stereophile, The Sensible Sound, The Absolute Sound,* and catalogs such as *Music Direct* and *Audio Advisor.* My goal? I'm desperately trying to figure out whether moving from MIT T-3 interconnects to T-2 interconnects from the CD player to preamplifier with CV interconnects from preamplifier to power amplifier smoothes out or retains the biting sound Jascha Heifetz makes when he goes up a major third in the Mozart violin concerto no. 5. English translation: I want to know what happens to the music when I switch the cables.

AND THAT'S NOT THE LEAST OF IT. The more I upgrade my equipment, the faster my problems increase. Do I need an isolation rack for my equipment with welded joints, or can I get away with adjustable shelves that use bolts? Do I need a power-line conditioner to clean up the electricity running into my system and eliminate electromagnetic interference and radio-frequency interference, so that the silences, as the ads say, become even more silent? What about a seismic sink or an air bladder for my CD player? My all-time favorite is the Shakti Electromagnetic Stabilizer, derived from an East Indian word that means "energy": it's a stone with quartz crystal oscillators; *Music Direct* says, "Place it on top of electronics and digital components to recover lost dynamic contrasts and inner detail." $199.99 for a stone?



IN A WAY, I SHOULD HAVE expected that I would some day succumb to stereo madness. "No man is a hypocrite in his pleasures," Dr. Johnson once observed, and I like to think of myself as a pretty pleasurable fellow. In grade school, while my schoolmates ate lunch in the cafeteria, I trudged home every day to listen to my father's ten-inch record of Jelly Roll Morton's "The Chant." There was something thrilling about pulling the heavy record out of its small, yellowing cover with a faded black-and-white picture of a sovereign Jelly Roll sitting at an upright piano. Even now, I prefer records to CDs because they look and sound better. As Edward Rothstein pointed out in the December 30, 1986, TNR, forget the recording industry hype about CDs being superior; the truth is that while records don't go as high or low as CDs, they sound much purer and sweeter. Apart from used records, small companies are beginning to re-release older recordings on "supremely quiet" 180-gram vinyl that sounds superior to the originals. In general, a record boom has begun; manufacturers like Linn and VPI are doing robust business.

INSPIRED BY JELLY ROLL AND LOUIS Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke, I decided to learn to play the trumpet. Initially, my parents banished me to the basement, but, to their astonishment, I stuck with it and took lessons. My teacher was from the old school. His students called him "the boss." So did I. A hulking Italian American, he would pound his desk, put his head in his hands, and, when you flubbed a passage, sob, "Why are you doing this to me?" I never heard him make a single mistake when he would play along with me, no matter how tricky the exercise. The pressure on an eight year old was intense. I doubt you could pull it off today. During the holidays, I felt a twinge of guilt when I came across a moldering practice sheet that had to be filled out every day with the number of hours played, signed by a parent; at the bottom, in the space for remarks by my teacher, it said in large, angry block letters, "Unprepared today. Why???!!!" Gulp. Still, I flourished well enough, spending a summer at Tanglewood and entering the conservatory at Oberlin College, where I soon discovered my limits at blowing my own horn. Back then, I simply didn't possess the discipline, the freedom of expression, or the nerves to hack it.

STEREOS, BY COMPARISON, seem blissful. They have no limits; they offer total access to, and control over, music. Or at least the comforting illusion of control. Despite the constant hand-wringing of the classical music industry, we live in a golden age of music. The re-releases of recordings from the vaults of companies like Deutsche Grammophon and RCA are nothing short of staggering. Fritz Wunderlich, Fritz Reiner conducting the Chicago Symphony, the list is endless. And the new stars are no slouches either, from Wynton Marsalis to Renée Fleming to Angela Hewitt. Closer to home, Leonard Slatkin's splendid transformation of the National Symphony Orchestra and emphasis on American works suggest that the contemporary music scene is not quite a wasteland. Indeed, one of the most refreshing developments in the past decade has been the steady move away from atonality toward neo-classicism.

OF COURSE, THE ILLUSION OF CONtrol can become maddening. How do you decide which version of music you want to recreate? Issues of *The Absolute Sound,* complete with footnotes, have focused on the question of subjective versus objective sound. After listening to a system costing tens of thousands of dollars at *SoundWorks,* a Maryland store that resembles an art gallery, I became even more befuddled. Soon enough, I was diagnosed as suffering from a case of CLF—critical listener fatigue. Since then, I've retired from the field of battle, vowed to accept the limitations of my own system. Still, I can't help wondering about the MIT Z-cord....

JACOB HEILBRUNN

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Theodore Waitt

Gateway 2000, North Sioux City, SD. 34. Married, 4 children.

Talked out of joining family cattle business. By father. Left college senior year to start computer mail order business in farmhouse. With $10,000 start-up loan secured by grandmother's CD.

"Everybody was heading to Silicon Valley. So I picked a cornfield."

Cofounded Gateway 2000 with partner, Mike Hammond, 1985. Direct-market PC seller and manufacturer based in South Dakota. First year revenues $100,000. Explosive growth due to low costs, fast service. Expanded overseas, 1993. Marketing coup: chose Holstein as company mascot.

"It was either the family cow or the family dog. 'Bunny' lost."

1996 revenues: $5 billion.

Started reading Forbes as a student at the University of Iowa in 1984.

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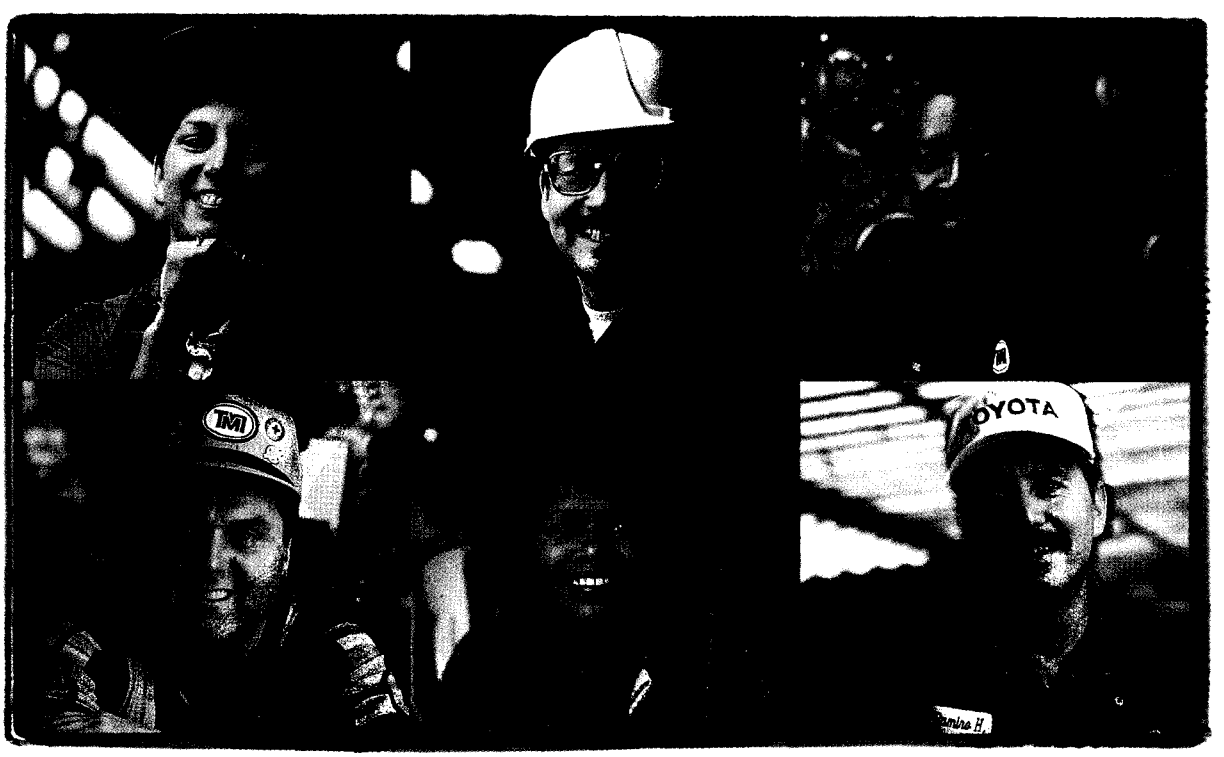
SOME OF THE FEATURES

that go into every

AMERICAN-BUILT TOYOTA



Here in the U.S., Toyota directly employs more than 20,000 people. In fact, more than half the Toyota vehicles sold in America are built by Americans in Kentucky, California - and soon in Indiana as well - with many parts and materials coming from U.S. suppliers. To people across America, and around the world, Toyota is more than just a source of local transport, it's a source of local pride.

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